

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



THE COMPLETE BOOK ON TAKEOUT DOUBLES

A MIKE LAWRENCE
BRIDGE CLASSIC



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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 informative 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	Stayman
Blackwood	Inverted minors
Bergen raises	Negative doubles
Drury	Strong jump shifts
Michaels cuebids	Unusual notrumps
Gerber	

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

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.

CHAPTER ONE

FOUR CONVENTIONS TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR TAKEOUT DOUBLES

These four conventions will prove useful to you.

1. THE MICHAELS CUEBID

When your RHO opens the bidding with 1♣ or 1♦ and you have a hand with 5-5 in the majors and enough points to bid, you can cuebid two of their suit to tell partner about your shape. This cuebid is useful because it lets you tell partner what you have before the opponents can interrupt your message. If you don't use Michaels cuebids, you have to bid 1♠ and hope to show the hearts later.

Cuebidding does more than show your shape. It presents the opponents with a difficult bidding decision and it threatens them with some lively bidding if your partner can join the party.

These hands would use the Michaels cuebid after an opening 1♣ or 1♦ bid:

- A. ♠ Q J 9 8 3 ♥ K Q 9 8 2 ♦ 8 ♣ 6 2
- B. ♠ A J 9 8 3 ♥ A J 10 5 4 ♦ 7 ♣ J 4
- C. ♠ K Q 8 7 2 ♥ A Q J 9 4 ♦ 8 ♣ Q 9
- D. ♠ A Q J 8 6 ♥ A K 9 6 4 ♦ K 8 ♣ 9

Not vulnerable, you would use Michaels on all four of these hands. I suggest 8 nice points or more when you are not vulnerable.

Vulnerable, I suggest at least 10 useful points for a Michaels cuebid. This means you might choose to pass the first hand but would use Michaels with the last three hands. These hands have a wide range of values and some players may object, saying it is too hard for partner to tell what you have. I disagree. I admit that partner may not get to find out how strong you are, but you gain a

lot anyway since you can put bidding pressure on the opponents. Anytime your partner has a fit, you can jerk the bidding to the three- or four-level in a hurry and leave the opponents guessing.

It is also possible to use the Michaels cuebid after an opening 1♥ or 1♠. There is an important difference between cuebidding a minor suit and cuebidding a major suit. When you use the Michaels cuebid after a minor suit, you always have both major suits. When you cuebid after a major suit opening, you show the other major *and one or the other* of the minors. At this time, your partner does not know which minor you have. I suggest that since Michaels after a major suit opening gets you higher than Michaels after a minor suit opening, you should have a little more for your Michaels bids.

These hands would all use the Michaels cuebid after an opening 1♥ bid, regardless of the vulnerability.

A. ♠ K J 8 7 6 ♥ 2 ♦ K Q 10 9 4 ♣ J 6

B. ♠ Q 10 7 5 2 ♥ 6 ♦ A 2 ♣ A Q 9 5 3

C. ♠ A Q J 9 8 ♥ J 7 ♦ — ♣ A K J 6 5 2

There are times when you may fudge a little with the shape and there are times when not making a Michaels bid will be informative to your partner. More discussion of this convention will come up in various places in the text.

2. THE RESPONSIVE DOUBLE

The responsive double is one of the best conventions around. It is sometimes confused with the negative double, but in fact has little in common with it. The responsive double is not used by the side that opens the bidding, which is the case with the negative double. My book, *Double! New Meanings for an Old Bid*, covers responsive doubles extensively. In this book, I discuss how responsive doubles work when your partner doubles and they raise.

THE RESPONSIVE DOUBLE WHEN PARTNER DOUBLES AND THEY RAISE

It works like this. Your LHO opens the bidding with one of a suit and your partner makes a takeout double. If your RHO raises to the two-level or three-level, a double by you is a takeout double telling partner you are interested in competing.

How does partner know what your double shows?

According to which suit the opponents are bidding, a responsive double shows two suits. Here is the structure:

1. When the opponents are bidding and raising a minor suit

If you make a responsive double of a minor suit, you are telling partner you have both major suits. If you had just one major, you would bid it.

2. When the opponents are bidding and raising a major suit

If you make a responsive double of a major suit, you are telling partner you have both minor suits. If you have the unbid major, you bid it, and if your only suit is a minor, you bid it.

For instance:

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?
<p>♠J 7 6 3 ♥ Q 10 7 2 ♦ A 10 4 ♣ J 3</p>			

You know you should bid something, but it isn't clear which major suit is best. The responsive double lets you show this hand by doubling. It says you have a hand with both majors, values to compete, and you want partner to select the best suit.

♠ 9 3 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ K J 8 4 ♣ 9 7 4 3

You have the unbid minor with enough values to bid it. Bid 2♦.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♥	?
<p>♠ Q 6 ♥ 8 6 2 ♦ A J 10 7 ♣ Q 9 8 4</p>			

This is a good enough hand to go to the three-level. But in which suit? Partner might have five clubs and three diamonds, or five diamonds and three clubs. The way you get to the better minor is to double, which asks partner to bid a minor.

♠ Q 6 5 3 ♥ 6 4 3 ♦ A J 10 4 ♣ J 8

Bid 2♣. Double would show both minor suits and deny four spades.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	3♦	?

♠ Q 6 4 3 ♥ A 9 6 2 ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ Q 4

I absolutely recommend you play responsive doubles if your RHO raises to the two-level. Responsive doubles can be used at the three- and the four-levels. Whether you use them at these levels depends on your partnership agreements. If you play responsive doubles at the three-level, this hand would be a good example. You have both majors and enough points to compete at the three-level. You might also use them at the four-level. But that is a bit obscure.

THE RESPONSIVE DOUBLE WHEN PARTNER OVERCALLS

As an aside, the responsive double can also be used when your partner overcalls and your RHO raises. For example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥	2♦	?

♠ Q 9 8 7 3 ♥ 4 ♦ 10 7 ♣ A Q 8 7 3

You would like to bid something, but how to do so is uncertain. Using the responsive double, you can double to show the two unbid suits. It is a little dangerous to double for takeout when partner overcalls because you don't know if he has support for either of the unbid suits. When partner makes a takeout double you do know of support, so you can be more optimistic.

On the hand above you have two five-card suits, which is fairly normal. You can double 2♦ with less shape as long as you have additional values with good suits.

You should be aware that the responsive double is at its best after partner's takeout double, but using it after an overcall does have merit. In all cases, the responsive double applies only when your RHO raises opener. If responder bids a new suit or bids notrump, the responsive double does not apply. If you decide to use this version of responsive doubles, you must also decide how high they apply. It is easy to say, "Let's play responsive doubles." You must discuss the ramifications as well.

3. EQUAL LEVEL CONVERSION (ELC)

Equal Level Conversion is an optional treatment. I will show the basic meaning here and will discuss it further when appropriate later.

Basically, if you make a takeout double and your partner bids a suit at the two-level, a bid by you in a higher-ranking suit does not show a good hand. Here is an example:

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
pass	2♣	pass	2♦

♠ K Q 8 3 ♥ 4 2 ♦ A Q J 7 3 ♣ 9 4

This auction, if using ELC, does not show a big hand with diamonds. It shows a hand with spades and diamonds and normal takeout double values. This is sane. If doubling and then bidding diamonds shows a big hand, you lose out on hands like this one. You could overcall 2♦ but you might not be able to show spades later. ELC lets you double with this hand, which is a good thing most of the time. Of course, if you do have a big hand with diamonds, you will have some problems.

Two things you need to know.

The first is that you should choose to use ELC only on hands with diamonds and one of the majors, like the hand above. Do not use this trick when you have other suit combinations.

The second point is that if you double and partner does not bid and you then bid diamonds, you are showing a normal big hand. For example:

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
1NT	pass	2♣	2♦

♠ A Q 3 ♥ 4 ♦ A K Q J 7 3 ♣ Q 8 3

When your partner does not bid, ELC is not in effect. Your 2♦ bid shows a fine hand.

4. LEBENSOHL

Lebensohl is another optional convention. There are two conventions called Lebensohl. The version I am talking about applies when you double a weak two-bid. It works this way.

West	North	East	South
		2♥	dbl
pass	?		

If North bids a suit at the two-level, in this case spades, it is a natural bid with approximately 0 to 7 or so points.

If North bids a suit at the three-level, in this case clubs or diamonds, it is a natural bid that promises a nice 7 points up to a lousy 11 points.

If North has a bad hand he bids 2NT, telling you to bid 3♣.

West	North	East	South
		2♠	dbl
pass	2NT	pass	3♣
pass	?		

Partner will pass if he has a weak hand with clubs.

He will bid 3♦ if he has a weak hand with diamonds.

He will bid 3♥ if he has a weak hand with hearts.

There is much more to this convention than shown here. I will elaborate on it in the section on bidding against preempts.

One important thing for you to be aware of is that you can use this convention on auctions where they bid and raise a major and you double.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	2♥	dbl
pass	?		

You can play that North's bidding is the same as if East had opened a weak 2♥ bid. This is a very interesting adaptation of the basic Lebensohl convention. I will discuss this further in the later section on Lebensohl.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TAKEOUT DOUBLE

INTRODUCTION TO THE TAKEOUT DOUBLE IN GENERAL

When your opponent bids a suit and you make a takeout double, the basic meaning is that you have a hand which has support for the three unbid suits and enough strength that it is safe for your side to bid. There are exceptions and I will address them later.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	?
♠ A J 8 3 ♥ 3 ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ A 10 7 3			

If your RHO opened with 1♥, you would be happy to double for takeout. This is the perfect hand for a takeout double. It has four-card support for the three unbid suits and it has opening bid strength. You might find this hand as an example of a takeout double on the first page of anyone's book, as you are doing here. It is easy to find perfect hands.

Doubling won't always get you a good result. If your partner is broke or if he doesn't have a four-card suit to bid, you may be in trouble. Still, a takeout double is safer than an overcall because you are offering three suits to play in instead of just one. Its flexibility makes it one of the safest bids you can use.

I am going to assume that anyone reading this book is already familiar with the takeout double and its basic requirements. I am not going to fill these pages with ideal examples of takeout doubles. It is more useful to look at example hands to see how far in any direction you can go with your takeout double. What strength do you need? What shape do you need? How strong do you have to be to double and then bid a suit? The following chapters will discuss these questions.

RHO OPENS WITH A ONE-BID: WHAT VARIATIONS ARE ALLOWED IN THE TAKEOUT DOUBLER'S STRENGTH?

This is not as easy a question to answer as one might think. The vulnerability, the shape of your hand, the auction, whether you are a passed hand; all of these affect how much you show when you make a takeout double. For now, let's assume your RHO opened with a one-bid in first seat and that no one is vulnerable. How many points does a takeout double show?

This will depend on your shape. If you have a perfect 4-4-4-1 hand, you can double with as little as 10 HCP. You should be aware that it is safer to double 1♣ than 1♠. If you double 1♣ and catch partner with nothing, you can at least play at the one-level. If you double 1♠ and find partner with the nothing hand, he has to go to the two-level to bid a suit. For this reason, you ought to have an 11-count for a minimum double of 1♠.

There is no upper range for a takeout double. If you get dealt a 4-4-4-1 hand with 26 points and your RHO bids one of your singleton, you should start by making a takeout double and then show your strength later.

In the examples that follow, and throughout this book, note that you are always South and no one is vulnerable unless otherwise indicated.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	?
♦ A 10 9 4 ♥ 6 ♦ K 9 8 2 ♣ A 10 9 4			

With good spots and shape, it is okay to double 1♥. Take away the tens and nines and I would sympathize with double, but wouldn't do it.

♦ A K Q 8 ♥ 2 ♦ A K Q 8 ♣ K Q J 6

Start with a takeout double. Save your excitement for the next round. It used to be that a bid of 2♥, cuebidding opener's suit, showed a huge hand. Now that the Michaels cuebid is so popular a cuebid to show a strong hand no longer exists.

You may not yet be using the Michaels cuebid or one of its variations, but you will find that it is a good tool to have. Not only is it good, but it will be a frequent bid for you. The Michaels cuebid will come up forty or fifty or sixty times as often as the 'strong' cuebid.

♦ A J 7 4 ♥ 5 4 ♦ K 10 4 ♣ K 9 6 5

I like double. With a doubleton heart and only three diamonds, you have to decide if having 11 decent points will compensate for the inferior distribution. I would accept a double with this, but wouldn't insist.

♠ Q 6 5 3 ♥ Q 8 ♦ K 8 4 ♣ A J 5 3

Pass. This hand has the same shape as the prior hand, but with 2 questionable points in hearts and only 10 points in the unbid suits. Throw in two tens and you would have a minimum double. As you can see, defining the strength of a takeout double depends partly on logic and partly on your agreed style. If you feel comfortable with the examples above, your judgment is in good shape regarding takeout double strength requirements.

WHAT VARIATIONS ARE ALLOWED IN THE TAKEOUT DOUBLER'S SHAPE?

This is the aspect of takeout doubles that causes trouble. Given that it would be nice to have a 4-4-4-1 hand for the double, how far from this ideal can you go? Sadly, there is much literature written about takeout doubles which is flat out wrong, and some which is dubious. The following material discusses what to do with the various shapes.

CAN YOU MAKE A TAKEOUT DOUBLE WITH ONLY THREE CARDS IN AN UNBID MAJOR?

Absolutely. In a perfect world, you will be dealt four cards in an unbid major. In the imperfect world of bidding, it is necessary to bid with many slightly imperfect hands in order not to be stolen blind. In the following hands, your RHO opens the bidding as indicated. What, if anything, should South bid?

West	North	East	South
	1 ♥		?

♠ Q J 8 ♥ J 3 ♦ A Q 8 3 ♣ K J 10 4

By all means, double. Why double with just three spades? There are bunches of reasons. First, for the pessimistic, the list of bad things that can happen, followed by the list of good things that can happen.

List of bad things that can happen

1. Partner may bid spades on four little ones and go down.
2. Partner may have a poor hand with four hearts and three of everything else and have nothing useful to bid.

List of good things that can happen

1. Partner may have five spades, in which case spades will be a good trump suit.
2. Partner may have four decent spades, in which case spades will be an okay spot.
3. Partner may have four little spades, but it turns out that nothing bad happens because partner plays the hand well.
4. Partner may have four little spades, but it turns out okay because the opponents bid some more and buy the hand.
5. Partner may bid notrump, in which case your 14 HCP hand will make a good dummy.
6. Partner may bid clubs or diamonds, in which case you have good support.
7. Your side may be able to push the opponents up one level and be able to defeat them.

Here is a typical layout. Look at the comparison between passing and making a takeout double. You are South.

♠ 7 5 3		♠ K 6
♥ 10 6 4		♥ K Q 9 7 5 2
♦ 9 2		♦ K J 7
♣ A Q 9 5 3		♣ 8 2
♠ A 10 9 4 2	N	♠ Q J 8
♥ A 8	W E	♥ J 3
♦ 10 6 5 4	S	♦ A Q 8 3
♣ 7 6		♣ K J 10 4

West	North	East	South
		1♥	pass
1♠	pass	2♥	pass
pass	pass		

This is what happens to you if you pass over 1♥. The bidding rates to end in 2♥. The defense can hold it to eight tricks but it will make an overtrick as often as not. In fact, if South leads the ♠Q, declarer can take eleven tricks. For the sake of this discussion, assume East makes eight tricks and scores 110 points.

What kind of result is this for North-South?

Pretty wretched, I would think. It is hard to imagine doing worse than this. Letting the opponents play in a safe partscore is generally poor.

Try this sequence instead:

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
1♠	2♣	2♥	pass
pass	3♣	pass	pass
3♥	pass	pass	pass

This is what can happen if South makes a takeout double. There may be variations on this auction, but this one is typical. The important thing is to see what happens when South doubles. North-South may end up in 3♣, either making or going down one. East-West may get to 3♥, going down one when South leads a club and North returns a diamond. Both of these results are better than allowing East-West to play in 2♥. The key? The key is simple. If South decides to wait for four spades before making a takeout double of 1♥, he will lose many hands like this one. The price for comfort is too high. Having three decent cards in one of the unbid suits is okay. In fact, you will have hands like this more often than not.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ A Q 8 2 ♥ 9 7 5 ♦ K 3 ♣ K Q 7 4

Double. It is sad to have only the ♥975. They are likely to be a liability. Still, the risks of passing are more serious than the risks of doubling. For you to be in trouble, all of these things have to happen:

1. Your partner has to have four bad hearts.
2. Your partner has to be declarer in a heart contract.
3. The hearts have to divide poorly for you.
4. The defenders have to defend well.

All of these things can happen. But will they? I think it unlikely. Think back. If you agree that you don't always double the opponents at the one-level when you should and if your defense isn't always perfect, then why worry that your opponents will always do the right thing? The chances of everything going wrong at once for you are slim.

Against this, there is the usual list of good things that can happen. You should look carefully at this list and remember it. It ought to give you courage in the future. Here are the good things that can happen:

1. Your partner may bid spades.
2. Your partner may bid notrump.
3. Your partner may bid clubs.
4. Your partner may have four decent hearts.
5. Your partner may have five hearts.
6. You may push them too high.
7. You may be able to make a partscore or a game that wouldn't be bid if you didn't act right away.
8. Your partner's bidding may assist you on defense.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ A J 7 ♥ K J 4 ♦ 6 3 2 ♣ A J 6 3

Double. Here is a hand that has no four-card major. Yet it is right to double rather than pass. If you are lucky, partner will have a decent four-card major or even a five-card major. If partner has a little good news, your side will be able to compete. If you don't double you get shut out.

Those of you who are big on balancing may say that you will come back in if the bidding dies out early. Easy to say. You would be happy to double 2♦ if the bidding goes this way.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
2♦	pass	pass	?

But if the bidding goes differently, you may not be sure of what to do. Say this is the bidding instead.

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

Are you supposed to bid now? If West has a good hand, your side is in big trouble. It is far safer to double 1♦ than to pass and try to catch up later.

It is true that doubling 1♦ can work poorly. If North is broke, there will be trouble. At least North will be at a low level. Here is a complete hand:

<table border="0"> <tr><td>♠</td><td>Q 8 6 2</td></tr> <tr><td>♥</td><td>9 6 2</td></tr> <tr><td>♦</td><td>J 8 4</td></tr> <tr><td>♣</td><td>10 9 2</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>♠</td><td>9 5 3</td></tr> <tr><td>♥</td><td>Q 10 8 5 3</td></tr> <tr><td>♦</td><td>A 9</td></tr> <tr><td>♣</td><td>K 8 7</td></tr> </table>	♠	Q 8 6 2	♥	9 6 2	♦	J 8 4	♣	10 9 2			♠	9 5 3	♥	Q 10 8 5 3	♦	A 9	♣	K 8 7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 20px;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<table border="0"> <tr><td>♠</td><td>K 10 4</td></tr> <tr><td>♥</td><td>A 7</td></tr> <tr><td>♦</td><td>K Q 10 7 5</td></tr> <tr><td>♣</td><td>Q 5 4</td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>♠</td><td>A J 7</td></tr> <tr><td>♥</td><td>K J 4</td></tr> <tr><td>♦</td><td>6 3 2</td></tr> <tr><td>♣</td><td>A J 6 3</td></tr> </table>	♠	K 10 4	♥	A 7	♦	K Q 10 7 5	♣	Q 5 4			♠	A J 7	♥	K J 4	♦	6 3 2	♣	A J 6 3
♠	Q 8 6 2																																														
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♠	A J 7																																														
♥	K J 4																																														
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♣	A J 6 3																																														

If South passes East's 1♦ bid, West will respond 1♥ and East will rebid 1NT. If this is passed out, East will make a lot of tricks. If South decides to bid over 1NT, North-South will be at the two-level, and if doubled will go down at least 300 points.

If South decides to come in with an imperfect takeout double, North will bid 1♠ if West passes and will pass if West bids 1♥ first. The result is that North-South will get no higher than 1♠ and they won't be doubled. Curious. It turns out to be safer for South to make an imperfect takeout double on the first round than to come in later.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

If your shape is imperfect for a takeout double and you choose to pass, your shape will be just as imperfect later. If you have the values to bid and your shape is remotely acceptable for a double, it is usually best to do your bidding early.

If you make a takeout double, even with imperfect shape, your partnership will be able to stop at a low level if your partner is broke. If you pass initially and decide to bid later, you will always get higher than when you bid right away. Here is a second possible hand.

		♠ K 8 6 3 2	
		♥ 9 6 2	
		♦ J 8	
		♣ Q 10 2	
♠ 9 5			♠ Q 10 4
♥ Q 10 8 5 3			♥ A 7
♦ A 9 4			♦ K Q 10 7 5
♣ 9 8 7			♣ K 5 4
	N W E S		
		♠ A J 7	
		♥ K J 4	
		♦ 6 3 2	
		♣ A J 6 3	

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♥	1♠	1NT	pass
pass	2♠	pass	pass
pass			

South doubles with the same balanced hand that he had in the previous example, but this time North comes through with a few points and a five-card suit. The hands fit well and will produce nine tricks. They might produce ten if the defense is careless.

Do not play bridge in fear that partner will always have a crummy hand and that the opponents will always defend perfectly and that the end of the world lies just around the corner. Winning bridge requires a little optimism. The takeout double is one of the best places to exercise it.

WARNING – I feel strongly that doubling with only three cards in one or both unbid majors is okay as long as you have a few extra points. Do not go further, though. Unless you have a mountain that can bid safely no matter how the bidding goes, you shouldn't make a takeout double with one or two cards in an unbid major. (More on this later.)

CAN YOU MAKE A TAKEOUT DOUBLE WITH FIVE CARDS IN A MINOR SUIT?

Yes. If your choice is between bidding a five-card minor suit at the two-level or making a takeout double, think seriously about the double. If you have a five-card minor and support for the other two suits, doubling is often best. Even if you have only three cards in the other suits, a double is better than putting your trust in a five-card suit, especially if the five-card suit is only so-so.

West	North	East	South
	1		?

♠ Q 10 6 ♥ 3 2 ♦ A K 9 ♣ K J 9 5 4

It's right to double. Keeping spades and diamonds in the picture is important enough to suppress the club suit. Keep in mind that if you bid 2♣ and run into a bad break, you may be in trouble. A double gives partner three choices of suits, and a fourth choice of notrump. A 2♣ bid gives partner fewer choices.

♠ 7 6 3 ♥ 3 2 ♦ A K J ♣ A J 10 8 3

Bid 2♦. With poor spades and much better clubs, it is better to overcall. There is a big difference between having the ♠Q106 and the ♠763. Doubling with the ♠763 is not wrong. It's just that on this hand there is a better alternative.

♠ J 6 5 2 ♥ 4 ♦ A Q 8 3 2 ♣ A 10 9

Double. It would be criminal to bid 2♦ and appalling to pass. Bidding diamonds risks losing the spade suit and, to a lesser degree, the club suit.

West	North	East	South
	1 ♣		?

♠ Q 8 3 ♥ K 3 2 ♦ K Q J 7 2 ♣ J 2

Bid 1♦. This is a poor hand that isn't really excited about competing. Your bid may help North with the opening lead, though. Also, if partner wishes to compete in a major suit, you will be happy to hear about it.

♠ Q 10 6 ♥ A 10 6 ♦ K 8 6 5 3 ♣ A 4

Double. With the majors improved and the diamond suit weakened, it is correct to double.

CAN YOU MAKE A TAKEOUT DOUBLE WITH FIVE CARDS IN A MAJOR SUIT?

There are two situations to look at here. You must note the difference. If you can overcall your major at the one-level, it is obviously safer to do so than if you have to overcall at the two-level.

1. If You Can Bid Your Major at the One-Level

If you have room to bid your major at the one-level, the following rule should apply.

RULE

Do not make a takeout double with a five-card major *unless* you have a good enough hand to double and then bid your major. This is very close to being a 100% rule.

This includes hands with 5-4 in the majors. (I will discuss what to do with 5-4 in the majors in the next few pages.)

The reason for this rule is that you may lose the major suit in the bidding. For example:

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?
<p>♠ A J 3 ♥ K 9 8 6 3 ♦ 8 2 ♣ K Q 7</p>			

Bid 1♥. Doubling is awful. Partner rates to bid spades, notrump, or clubs. It will be a miracle if he bids hearts. Assuming partner bids something besides hearts, will you be sure you are in the best contract? Let's say partner bids 1♠. If you pass 1♠, you will feel guilty that you have an unshown five-card heart suit. If you listen to your guilt and bid 2♥, you will be overbidding by an ace or more. Whatever you do rates to get you too high or into the wrong suit. For instance, say these are the two hands:

♠ 10 6 5 4
♥ Q 7 2
♦ A 9 4
♣ 9 8 2
♠ A J 3
♥ K 9 8 6 3
♦ 8 2
♣ K Q 7

If you double, your partner will bid 1♠. Spades will play a trick or two worse than hearts. If you double and then bid 2♥, your partner will raise. You would like to play in 2♥. The way to do that is to overcall.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ K Q 7 ♥ J 8 6 5 2 ♦ 5 2 ♣ A K 8

Bid 1♥. You have 13 HCP, as you did on the previous hand, and your distribution is the same. However, your hearts are much weaker. With poor hearts and good strength in the black suits, it is less clear what to do. I offer the advice that you should still overcall 1♥. Most experts agree with this. Their view is that if you bid 1♥, you may be able to make a belated takeout double to show that you have support for clubs and spades along with a five-card heart suit. If you double instead, you will never get to show the heart suit.

♠ 6 4 2 ♥ 8 6 5 4 2 ♦ K Q ♣ A K J

It is acceptable to pass once in a while. Passing this hand isn't cowardly, it is just recognizing that you have too many flaws to bid. If you absolutely must bid with this hand, I reluctantly accept 1♥. Double is possible, but it too hides the heart suit. In the long run, you will do better by showing your major suits than by hiding them.

♠ K J 2 ♥ 8 6 5 4 2 ♦ K 2 ♣ A Q J

Nuts. 1♥ or double. Both have warts. Choose what suits you. This is the rare hand where doubling with a five-card major might work out. You have good support for all suits, a wretched five-card major, and values to bid.

This guideline applies to spades too, as in the following hand. Doubling with five spades can also lead to trouble.

♠ Q J 7 6 3 ♥ K J 2 ♦ 3 ♣ A J 10 8

Bid 1♠. This is a hand from actual play. At a number of the tables the South player doubled, thinking he could bid 1♠ if partner bid 1♥. This is an easy way to rationalize doubling and it may even work. But it shouldn't. Certainly it won't work if your partner takes you seriously, thinking you have a big hand.

Note that when you make a takeout double with a five-card major, you may not get to show your suit at the one-level. The bidding isn't always user friendly for you. Here are two possible trouble sequences showing the dangers of doubling with the hand above.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
2♦	pass	pass	?
West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
2♦	2♥	pass	?

On the first sequence, South started with double and now has to choose between 2♣ and pass. 2♣ is a huge overbid and passing means you never get to show the most important feature of your hand.

On the second sequence, your partner bid hearts. Unfortunately, hearts may not be as good a contract for your side as spades.

2. If You Have to Overcall Your Major at the Two-Level

There is one case where you can double with a five-card major. Specifically, when your RHO bids 1♠ and you have a hand with five hearts and enough points to bid, you have choices. Do you overcall 2♥ or do you make a takeout double?

West	North	East	South
		1♠	?
♦ 8 3 ♥ K Q 10 6 2 ♦ A Q 3 ♣ Q J 10			

Assuming that you judge this hand worth bidding, I have no preference for doubling or bidding 2♥. If you double, you may miss a heart fit and if you bid 2♥, you may be in trouble when a minor suit was safe. Partner can have any of these three hands:

♦ A 10 7 2 ♥ 5 3 ♦ 8 6 5 2 ♣ 8 3 2

If this is what partner has, you should pass over 1♠.

♦ 10 6 5 2 ♥ J 8 7 ♦ 6 2 ♣ K 7 6 3

If this is partner's hand you will be safe in 2♥ or 3♥. Overcalling 2♥ will get you to a good contract.

♦ J 9 6 2 ♥ 3 ♦ 10 7 2 ♣ K 9 7 6 3

Finally, if partner has this hand you will survive a club partscore, but will be down if you play in hearts.

The point of this discussion is that you will have tough decisions when your

choices are to overcall 2♥ or double. Learn this one little secret well. It is harder to bid over 1♠ than any of the other suits. Be honest and recognize this. When your opponent opens 1♠ you will have many difficult decisions.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	?
♠ 7 ♥ A J 10 7 3 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ K J 10 4			

With a singleton spade, your hand will be very good for play in all suits. Does this mean you should double? In a recent Nationals in the finals of the Spingold teams, Zia Mahmood bid 2♥ with this hand but Jeff Meckstroth made a takeout double. On this occasion, doubling was right since partner had six clubs and no hearts. The point here is that nothing is perfect. Even experts disagree.

DEVIANT SHAPES THAT MAY HAVE TO MAKE TAKEOUT DOUBLES

1. *Balanced hands*

Anyone can say “Double” when they have the right hands. More difficult is knowing when to double when you have a good hand with non-classic shape. Following are some hands that might tempt you. Which should double and which should not?

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?
♠ A K 4 ♥ J 9 8 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ A Q 8 4			

Double. Poor shape, but all working points. The cost of passing is greater than the cost of bidding. If your partner has any modest hand with a five-card major or if he has four clubs, you should be safe in bidding. Note that you won’t get to two of a major unless your partner has enough to bid to 2♥ or 2♠ himself.

♠ A Q 7 ♥ K Q 5 ♦ 8 6 5 2 ♣ K J 2

Double. The shape is worse than on the previous hand. With 15 useful points in the unbid suits, though, the hand has potential. Remember. There is danger in bidding if you can’t find a fit, but there is greater danger in passing. If North has any five-card suit and a few points, you will be able to make a medium-sized partscore. If North has a 10-count, you may have a game. Ask yourself this. What has to happen for doubling to be bad? Your partner has to have nothing

and the opponents have to double you. Remember that your partner will usually bid one of a major, which isn't easy for the opponents to hurt. And, if your partner bids freely, your 15 HCP will make up for the lack of a fourth trump.

Note these points:

1. You must not bid 1NT. You don't have a stopper in their suit. The first requirement for a 1NT overcall is that their suit is under control. Four small is inadequate.
2. If you pass, it will be impossible for you to come back in. It is too much to hope that your partner will be able to bid if you pass. The ball is in your court and you either act now or do not act at all.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ K Q 8 ♥ A 7 3 ♦ K 4 3 2 ♣ J 8 7

Pass. You have only 13 points, some of which are in their suit. This hand is a comfortable pass. Compare this hand with the previous hand, which had 15 points, all in the unbid suits.

♠ K 8 7 3 ♥ A J 6 ♦ Q 8 2 ♣ K 7 2

Pass. Your ♦Q is poor and the shape is bad. When you double with shapes like this, you must have extra values to compensate. There is a little-known way to show hands like these and I recommend it to you. *Pass*. You are right that I am suggesting some pushy doubles, but I am not suggesting suicidal doubles. Passing is legal, wise, and often best.

2. Hands with two cards in an unbid major

West	North	East	South
		1♣	?

♠ A J 8 3 ♥ A 8 ♦ A J 7 3 ♣ 8 7 2

Pass. Do not double without at least three-card support for each unbid major. The *only* time you can violate this rule is when you have a big hand which can handle anything partner does. Remember this rule. It is acceptable to pass on a few good hands. If you pass with hands like this one, your partner won't worry about your judgment. When you do double, partner will trust you and will bid accordingly.

♠ K Q 7 ♥ 9 3 ♦ Q 8 2 ♣ A K J 8 2

You may overcall 1NT if you feel lucky, but you should not double. Doubling with hands like this is terrible. There are two important reasons for this. Getting to a bad contract is the most obvious reason. The second reason is that you will lose your partner's trust. Results like the following will discourage your partner quickly.

<p>♠ 9 5 2 ♥ K 8 6 4 2 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ 6 3</p> <p>♠ A J 8 6 4 ♥ Q 5 ♦ 10 7 6 3 ♣ 5 4</p>		<p>♠ 10 3 ♥ A J 10 7 ♦ A J 9 ♣ Q 10 9 7</p> <p>♠ K Q 7 ♥ 9 3 ♦ Q 8 2 ♣ A K J 8 2</p>
--	--	--

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♠	2♥		

If everyone passes 2♥, it will go down two or three tricks. This isn't very good. If 2♥ is doubled, it will be worse. If South decides he can't stand to play in 2♥ and runs to 2NT, the result will be just as messy.

Note that North has a five-card heart suit. As you will see in a later section, North is entitled to bid 2♥ with just four of them! Will partner be happy to see your hand if he has ♥Q864 instead of ♥K8642?

3. Hands with two cards in an unbid minor

West	North	East	South
		1♥	?
♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ A Q 9 8 ♣ Q 7			

Try doubling with this. You never double with two cards in an unbid major because partner will be going out of his way to bid it. With a doubleton in a minor, it is okay to double as long as you have a full four-card support for the

other suits. If partner bids diamonds, spades, or notrump, you are happy. If partner bids clubs, you have to pass and hope partner has five of them. You gain when a fit is found or when you push the opponents too high and you lose in the one case when you end up in a bad club contract. The risk is worth taking.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	?

♠ Q J 8 3 ♥ A K J 3 ♦ 9 7 ♣ K 8 2

I suggest doubling. This is a difficult hand. Your two little diamonds are terrible for a takeout double, but you do have good holdings in the majors. As always, you must weigh the potential gains against the potential losses. Doubling is still a winner with this hand since partner will try to bid a major suit. If partner bids diamonds, you will pass. However, partner will bid a major often enough that you should take a chance and double.

4. Hands with five of one major and four of the other

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?
A. ♠ A 8 6 5 2 ♥ K Q 8 7 ♦ 3 ♣ K 7 3			
B. ♠ A Q 7 6 ♥ Q J 7 6 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A 7			

What should South do holding either of these two hands? Note that the first hand has five spades and four hearts and the second hand has four spades and five hearts.

I alluded earlier to hands with 5-4 in the majors. Hands with five spades and four hearts are very different from hands with five hearts and four spades. They need to be discussed separately.

Hands with five spades and four hearts

With five spades and four hearts, the current thinking is that you should overcall 1♠ and later bid hearts if possible. The idea is that partner will play you for five spades and four hearts. Why will he think you have five spades and four hearts and not expect you to have 5-5 in the majors?

Remember the Michaels cuebid I discussed earlier? If you use the Michaels cuebid (recommended), you will automatically show 5-5 major suit hands by cuebidding. If you overcall spades and then bid hearts, your partner will know that you do not have 5-5 and will tend to expect 5-4 instead.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ A 8 6 5 2 ♥ K Q 8 7 ♦ 3 ♣ K 7 3

Returning to the first example hand above, you should overcall 1♠. It is not a perfect bid but with luck, you will be able to show the rest of your hand. If you double, you won't be happy if partner bids clubs or notrump, and you will be uncertain what to do if LHO bids and partner bids nothing at all.

Hands with four spades and five hearts

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ A Q 7 6 ♥ Q J 7 6 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A 7

Bid 2♦, Michaels. This is a headache hand. Life will be easier for you if you never hold it. You can overcall 1♥, but it won't be easy for you to show spades on a later round. The solution I like is to make a Michaels cuebid with this hand, but I recognize the problems it can create. At least your major suits are both good ones and you have opening bid values. Frankly, there is no perfect bid. Hands with four spades and five hearts are tough. My offered solution here is not universally popular. Be sure that you and your partner have discussed this approach. Note that doubling is also a flawed choice.

♠ 7 6 3 2 ♥ A Q 10 8 4 ♦ A 6 ♣ K 3

Bid 1♥. The spades are too poor to introduce via Michaels. Do not double, either. Doubling and then showing hearts later promises more. If you double, you will hate hearing 2♣ or 3♣ from partner. Overcall 1♥ and hope to make a delayed takeout double.

♠ A K J 9 ♥ 9 7 6 3 2 ♦ A J 2 ♣ 8

Bid 2♦. This hand is different from the one above in that it has excellent spades and five poor hearts. The hand is good enough that you want to bid something. Michaels is my choice because I do not mind if partner bids spades. In addition, bidding 1♥ is not as attractive given that the hearts are so poor. Be sure that when you bid Michaels without classic shape, you have opening bid strength to make up for the lack of playing strength. If you are reluctant to bid Michaels, ask yourself - what bid makes you happier?

If you double, partner may bid clubs.
If you bid 1♠, you may lose the heart suit.
If you bid 1♥, you may lose the spade suit.
2♦ is not perfect. It feels to me that it gives you less to worry about than other bids.

Here is a particularly nasty question. What should you bid if the opening bid on this hand was 1♣ instead of 1♦? Should you make a takeout double or use Michaels? I do not believe a consensus ‘best’ answer exists. When this happens, I go out and take a poll. In this case a takeout double was the winner, but no one was happy with their choice. It was a case of hating it less than anything else. The problem, of course, is that the fifth heart will be lost in the auction. So life is imperfect, and bridge mimics life.

♠ A K J 9 ♥ 9 7 6 3 2 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ 8

Pass. This hand has the same shape as the hand above but without the high-card strength. When your shape is not perfect, you must have a good hand for a Michaels bid.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW STRONG DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO DOUBLE AND BID AGAIN?

HOW STRONG DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO DOUBLE AND THEN BID A SUIT?

If you ask all of your partners how much they need to double 1♦ and then bid 1♠, I imagine you will get a range of opinions. This is not surprising since experts can't agree either. I will offer my thoughts, but recognize that you can find different opinions elsewhere.

It is agreed that you need a very good hand to double and then bid a suit. It is useful to see why. Knowing why you need a good hand is a first step in determining how good your hand has to be.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?
<p>♠ A 7 3 ♥ K Q 8 7 2 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ A 9</p>			

This is a fair hand, but it is not a great hand. All players will agree that it is right to do something after a 1♦ bid. The only question is what action is best. Let's see what can happen if you double.

West	North	East	South
2♦	3♣	1♦	dbl
<p></p>			

You wrongly start with double and your LHO raises to 2♦. This is a gentle bid, yet it suffices to get your side into trouble. Your partner decides he has enough to compete with 3♣, and there you are. You are at the three-level. You haven't shown your suit yet and you do not like clubs. Do you bid hearts or do you pass? It is enough to realize you have a problem. No need to dwell on the possible disasters waiting for you.

It never fails. When you double, the opponents *or* your partner will bid something. When you get your next turn to bid, you may have to bid at a higher level than you want to. In the example sequence, you doubled. The result is that if you want to bid hearts, you have to do it at the three-level. This isn't what you want. It is better to make a natural bid and then, if you find a fit, to determine how high to go. This hand should overcall 1♥.

In general, if you have just one suit to show, you should bid it when you have 17 HCP or less. If you overcall and your partner can't raise, you are unlikely to have a game in your suit.

It is when you have 18 HCP or more that you consider doubling as opposed to overcalling. If you fear that your partner can have enough for game but won't be able to raise, then you need to double first and then show your suit. Naturally, it isn't quite as easy as all that. Points alone will not tell you what to do. Your decision to double will be influenced by other things besides points. One of the things that you must consider is the suit you intend to bid next.

YOU DOUBLE, INTENDING TO BID A SUIT NEXT. ARE THE REQUIREMENTS THE SAME FOR ALL SUITS?

Here is an important guideline that you should be aware of. Curiously, I have never seen it in print before.

When you are thinking of making a takeout double, intending to bid your suit later to show a big hand, a major consideration is whether your suit is higher or lower than opener's suit. Here is why this is so important.

If they open a suit that is higher-ranking than your suit, there is a danger that their side will raise their suit, forcing you to bid your suit at a higher level than you like.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
2♥	pass	pass	?

♠ A Q 3 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A Q ♣ A Q 9 7 5 3

Are you happy to hear West raise to 2♥? Are you willing to bid 3♣?

How happy will you be if West raises to 3♥?

If they open a suit that is lower-ranking than your suit, you do not mind as much if they find a fit.

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

♠ A Q 9 7 5 3 ♥ A Q ♦ 9 4 ♣ A Q 3

Are you happy to hear West raise to 2♦? You are not bothered at all. You can bid 2♠, showing a big hand.

Will you like it if West raises to 3♦? You are not delighted but at least you can bid 3♠ and not feel aggrieved.

The point is that when their suit is higher than yours, you will often be pushed around if they have a fit. When this is the case, you need to have a really good hand to double and then bid your suit.

When their suit is lower than yours, you can take slightly greater liberties because it will be harder for them to outbid you.

REMINDER

You have seen this reminder before and probably will again. When you have spades, you are in charge. It is rare that you do not get the last word when you own the spades.

TWO EXTRA CONCERNS

1. Might the opponents be able to push you around in a suit they have not yet bid? An example:

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♠	pass	2♠	?

♠ K 3 ♥ A K Q ♦ K Q J 8 7 4 ♣ 4 2

Even though your diamonds are higher than opener's club suit, they may be able to bid a major and push you higher that way.

2. It is also possible that your partner may be the problem. An auction like the following won't be much fun.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
3♣	3♠	pass	?

You were ready to bid 3♦ over 3♣, but your partner's innocent 3♠ bid is now a problem.

My suggestion is this. If you are worried that your opponents *or your partner* will make bids you do not want to hear, then go ahead and make a simple overcall instead of doubling. When there is no apparent danger or when you have a really good hand, then go ahead and double first.

DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR HAND. IS IT REALLY WORTH DOUBLING AND BIDDING A SUIT?

Before going into example hands, I want to emphasize that points do not take tricks. Furthermore, not all points are created equal. In the following hands there will be examples that seem to violate the high-card point requirements that many texts (and players) hold sacred. Start working on your judgment. Note why some 16-point hands are better than some 18-point hands. Guidelines and rules help get you started, but judgment is what keeps you going.

West	North	East	South
	1♣		?

♠ K Q J 9 6 ♥ A Q ♦ A Q 9 6 ♣ 5 2

This is a minimum double given that you intend to bid spades next. You can envision a game opposite some hands that are too weak to raise a simple 1♣ overcall. For instance, if partner has the ♦K and some spade support, 4♣ may make after taking a heart finesse. If you were to bid 1♣, you would miss game opposite some of partner's 4- and 5-point hands. Having the spade suit is nice because at the least, you can bid them at the three-level if necessary.

♠ A K Q J 9 ♥ K Q ♦ J 6 5 3 ♣ Q 4

Bid 1♣. This 18 HCP hand just isn't worth 18 points. This hand has the same shape as the previous example and it has better spades, but the rest of the hand is poor. If you overcall 1♣ with this and you don't get to game, you won't miss much. Many of the honors in this hand have the potential to be worthless. The ♦J and the ♣Q may turn into nothing. And note the king-queen doubleton of hearts. You will get a trick in hearts, but you have to spend 5 HCP to do it. If you had the ♥KQ7, you would have the potential to take two heart tricks. Watch out for unsupported honors or honor combinations.

West	North	East	South
	1♦		?

♠ Q 2 ♥ A Q 10 8 4 ♦ K 4 3 ♣ A Q J

Bid 1♥. This hand has 18 HCP but it is not as good as it looks. It's balanced and it has a potentially worthless ♣Q. If you double and they can bid to just 2♦, you won't be happy bidding 3♥. Better to overcall 1♥. If your partner has a decent 6-count with heart support he will raise. You will still have to use judgment but at least you will have found hearts.

♠ K 4 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ 8 4 ♣ A K J 7 5 4

Another lovely hand that should start with a 2♣ overcall. It will be a miracle if you double and later get to bid 2♣ with this hand. That would be ideal but you can't hope for it. If they can bid to 2♦ or 2♠, you have to bid 3♣, and your hand is not that good. When you have clubs, you really do need something special. The next example is acceptable to double 1♦ and then bid clubs.

♠ A Q 8 ♥ A 4 ♦ 8 ♣ A K J 8 7 5 4

Double. The reason you need a hand this good is that when you have a long suit, there is distribution at the table and the opponents may bid up to the three-level before you get to bid again. If you double and West bids 2♦ and East bids 3♦, a believable sequence, you have to bid 4♣ if you wish to show this hand. In this case you can do that, although it is not guaranteed to work.

Note that there is the possibility that your partner will bid something that runs counter to your intentions. You won't be happy if he bids hearts.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	?

♠ Q 8 4 ♥ 4 ♦ A K Q J 9 6 ♣ K J 5

This one is easy. Bid 2♦. You are nowhere near good enough to double and then bid diamonds at the three-level. If you double and West bids 3♥ you have to bid them at the four-level, and worse, if East continues to 4♥, you are faced with bidding them at the five-level.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	?

♠ A 7 ♥ A 4 ♦ Q 9 ♣ A K Q 10 5 4 3

This is a good hand that probably can survive doubling. A better bid exists, however. Bid 3NT. This is natural and almost always shows something like this hand. A source of tricks. A spade stopper. Good values. And not much interest in hearing a bid from partner.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	?

♠ 4 ♥ A K J 8 3 ♦ A 3 ♣ A Q 10 9 4

Those pesky spades again. Annoying. If you double, there is the usual danger that they will get the bidding up before you sort it out. Best is not to double or to bid hearts. I suggest a 2♠ bid, assuming you use Michaels.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ A K J ♥ A 4 ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ A Q 8 7 6

Bid 2♣. This is a hard hand. Be aware that when you have a minor suit, it can be difficult for you to double and then get your suit in. Here, for instance, you will feel uncomfortable after any of these sequences:

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♥	pass	2♥	?

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	2♦	?

West	North	East	South
pass	1♥	2♦	?

West	North	East	South
2♦	pass	pass	?

West	North	East	South
3♦	pass	pass	?

These first four sequences are innocent enough, yet they all force you to decide whether to bid clubs at the three-level. The last sequence is less innocent. If you want to bid your clubs on the last sequence, you get to do so at the four-level. Ouch!

My feeling is that if the clubs were better, say ♣AQJ97, I would double. With the hand as it is, overcalling 2♣ feels slightly the better bid.

Be aware that when you have a big hand with only a five-card minor suit, the bidding can become embarrassing in a hurry. Try to avoid doubling and bidding a minor with only a five-card suit.

Continuing with example hands:

West	North	East	South
		1♠	?
<p>♠ Q 2 ♥ A J 8 ♦ A J ♣ K Q J 7 6 3</p>			

Start with 2♣. This is an 18-point hand, but it has many flaws. It has some wasted cards, plus the opening bid was 1♠. That 1♠ bid should worry you. It alerts you that there may be some spade bidding by them, which means you will have to bid clubs at the three- or four- or even the five-level.

I am willing to admit that if I overcall 2♣ it doesn't have to work out. I suggest that when you have a minor suit and the opponents are bidding a major, you wait for a gilt-edged 18 before you double. You will lose a few hands but you will gain when your partner learns he can take your bidding seriously.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	?
<p>♠ K Q J 7 6 3 ♥ A J 8 ♦ A J ♣ Q 2</p>			

Double. This hand is the same as the previous except that the clubs and spades have been switched. Also, the opening bid has been changed from 1♠ to 1♣. Given the extra bidding room you have gained, you can double with this hand if you wish. It is nice to have the spade suit since you can usually have the last word.

EXPERT TRICK — EQUAL LEVEL CONVERSION

Doubling and then bidding a suit should show a big hand. There is one auction where you can, by agreement, double and then bid a new suit without a big hand. The situation is specific so it is easy to define. If you double a major for takeout and partner bids 2♣, you can bid 2♦ without a monster hand. This agreement is called Equal Level Conversion (ELC).

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
pass	2♣	pass	?

♠ A J 9 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ A K J 9 2 ♣ 8 3

Bid 2♦. This is a hard hand to bid if you don't start with a double. It gets your spades into the bidding, which is important. The trouble is that your partner may bid clubs and you won't like it. The solution is to play that doubling and then bidding 2♦ over 2♣ shows a normal double with four spades and five (usually) or six diamonds.

There are some dangers to this treatment. For example, the opponents may get pushy. If LHO raises to 2♥, your partner has to bid 3♣ if he wants to bid them. You, in turn, have to decide whether or not to bid diamonds. Another danger is that when you have a real 19-point hand, it won't suffice for you to double and then bid 2♦. Partner will think you have an ELC type hand. These are real problems. Against that, if you can't double with this hand, then what do you do?

Anything besides double has troubles of its own. ELC allows you show this hand easily. Basically, it comes down to which problems you least mind having. In general, ELC keeps you out of trouble. The only difficulty is that when you do get into trouble, it can be a lulu.

Note that you cannot use this trick when you have one major and clubs. You can only do this when your minor suit is diamonds. For example:

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
pass	2♦	pass	?

♠ 7 3 ♥ A K J 3 ♦ 8 3 ♣ A J 10 8 7

All your worst nightmares. You can't bid 3♣ since that shows a big hand. Likewise if you bid 2♥.

The answer is that you can't double with hands like this. You can double when you have the unbid major and diamonds because you can correct 2♣ to 2♦. You can't double with this hand because you have nowhere to go when partner bids the suit you don't really have. If you choose to use ELC, you need to know when it applies.

I would not want to pass with this hand and would choose 2♣ as the least dangerous bid. There are some sequences where I can bid hearts later. I won't always get to do what I want but it's better than passing and doing nothing.

IF YOU DOUBLE AND BID A NEW SUIT, IS IT FORCING?

If you double and then bid a new suit, do you know whether the bid is forcing? Does it make a difference if your partner made a free bid? Here are some common situations along with my suggestions. Note that this is an uncertain area of bidding. My suggestions are just that.

1. You double, LHO passes, and partner makes a simple response.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	pass	?

If South bids 1♣ or 2♦ he is showing a good hand, but since North can have nothing these bids are not forcing. North can pass. Even if you jump to 2♠ or 3♦ your partner can pass. If South has a really huge hand, he must cuebid in order to create a forcing auction.

2. You double, LHO bids, and your partner makes a free bid at the one- or two-level.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♥	1♠	pass	2♦
West	North	East	South
2♣	2♥	pass	2♠

In both of these sequences, North made a free bid. He isn't showing a lot, but he does have something. I suggest that after a free bid, a new suit by the doubler is forcing. 2♦ on the first auction, and 2♠ on the second auction, force North to bid again.

You are not, however, forced to game. If you jump shift after a free bid, you can play that you are forced to game. This is reasonable since you know partner isn't totally broke.

3. You double and partner bids 1NT. It doesn't matter if 1NT is a free bid or just a simple response.

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

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

Whether North's 1NT is a free bid or not, you need a special distinction here.

If you bid two of a suit *lower-ranking* than opener's, you are not showing a big hand. You are just running from notrump.

If you bid two of a *higher-ranking* suit, you are showing the usual big hand. After all, if you didn't have the needed 18 points, you would just overcall instead of doubling.

For instance:

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

♠ A Q 7 4 ♥ J 8 3 ♦ 2 ♣ A J 8 7 6

Bid 2♣. Clubs is lower than their suit, diamonds, so it is not a forcing bid. In fact, it does not show a huge hand. It just shows a hand that thinks 2♣ is a better contract than 1NT.

♠ A Q J 10 7 ♥ A K ♦ A 6 5 3 ♣ 8 2

Bid 2♠. You would bid 1♠ if you had a normal overcall. When you double and then bid spades, a higher suit than opener's suit, you show a big hand.

HOW STRONG DO YOU HAVE TO BE TO DOUBLE AND THEN BID NOTRUMP?

In my opinion, the huge majority of players know the answer to this question. I give classes in which this question comes up. The answers are not in perfect agreement, but the consensus is that doubling and bidding 1NT later shows in the neighborhood of 18 points. A nice neighborhood.

Then we get into some actual hands. Lo and behold, something devilish takes over the room and silliness sets in. Shortly after discussing the takeout double, I put this problem hand on the blackboard.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	?

♠ A Q J 8 ♥ 6 3 ♦ Q 10 7 ♣ A J 8 5

“What should you bid with this hand?” I ask. A few say that pass is best because of the bad shape. One wonderful voice suggests overcalling 1♠. (Overcalling on a four-card suit can be a very good idea if done properly. See my book, *The Complete Book on Overcalls*.)

And then I hear the dreaded “Double.” It never fails. When I ask what the correct bid is when partner responds 1♥, the voice weakens, but still answers. “1NT?” Why is it that out of one hundred sane players who know that doubling and then bidding 1NT shows a good hand, a third of them forget as soon as they get to the table? I leave you to find out the answer.

As to what doubling and bidding notrump should show, I think you need something in the range of 17 to a terrible 19 points. I might sneak in some 16-point hands if I felt it was important to start with a double, but they will be the exception.

N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
	1♦		?
<p>♠ K 3 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ K 10 9 7 3</p>			

This is the traditional hand you need for doubling and then bidding 1NT. This is a good 18 points with good stoppers in diamonds.

N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
	1♣		?
<p>♠ A Q J 7 ♥ K Q J 3 ♦ 9 3 ♣ A 10 8</p>			

This is the kind of 17-point hand that can consider doubling and then bidding notrump. Overcalling 1NT would leave me worried about missing a major suit. If partner bids 1♦, I will bid 1NT and hope not to get too high. I gain when partner can bid a major. I lose when partner can't. Here is the kind of North hand I am catering to:

♠ 8 3 2 ♥ 9 7 6 4 ♦ A 8 7 4 ♣ 6 4

If partner has this hand, doubling will get us to a heart partscore that may produce ten tricks. Conversely, going down in 1NT is likely.

You can choose to say that doubling and bidding notrump shows the 18- or 19-point hand, or you can use a looser definition of 16 to 19. Just remember that when you double with a 16-count intending to bid notrump next, it is because you have both majors and do not want to miss a good fit. It actually won't make much difference in the long run. The main requirement here is that doubling and bidding 1NT does show some kind of good hand.

YOU DOUBLE AND THEN DOUBLE AGAIN WITHOUT HEARING A BID FROM PARTNER

What does your second double mean? Here are some typical examples of this situation with explanations.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
2♣	pass	pass	dbl

♠ J 10 8 2 ♥ K Q 9 8 ♦ A K J 10 ♣ 3

This second double is for takeout, promising no less than this hand. Your perfect shape makes up for a lot. If your partner has a four-card suit and 3 or 4 working points, a partscore should be easy.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
3♣	pass	pass	dbl

♠ A 8 7 3 ♥ A Q 9 8 ♦ A Q 10 ♣ 3 2

Your second double is still takeout. When you double a suit and your partner does not bid, a later double of the same suit is for takeout. Being at the three-level does not matter. Here you have a good hand with slightly blemished shape. You need a hand like this one to consider doubling again at the three-level.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
4♣	pass	pass	dbl

♠ A J 7 3 ♥ A J 10 9 ♦ A K 10 9 ♣ 3

The second double is still takeout and confirms the values that you have. Your partner may exercise the right to pass but if he knows what you are doing, that will be okay.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
2♣	pass	pass	dbl
3♣	pass	pass	dbl

♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ K J 3 2 ♦ A K J 5 ♣ 3

This auction is a bit unusual because West raised to 2♣ and then bid 3♣ later. Why he did not bid 3♣ on the previous round is not known to you, but you do have a big hand. The way to show these values is to double again. Partner has passed twice but he is still allowed to have a four- or five-card suit with a jack or a queen. There are still chances that your side has a game and at the least, you rate to have a partscore to fight for. You would not expect partner to pass since your double is takeout but if your partner has a bad hand with ♣J1074, he might choose to pass. Your defensive values should get you a nice profit. That will teach West to bid this way.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♣	pass	2♣	dbl

♠ J 6 3 ♥ A Q J 8 ♦ A K J 7 3 ♣ 4

Partner hasn't bid so this is still a takeout double. Since they have now bid two suits, you are emphasizing the two unbid suits. You could have four spades, but that is a moot point. You do promise four or more cards in the remaining two suits; hearts and diamonds.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TAKEOUT DOUBLE WHEN BOTH OPPONENTS HAVE BID

There are many sequences where West opens with a one-bid and East bids something. When East does not show a good hand, which is true of most of his bids, you can consider making a takeout double.

There is one specific sequence where you should usually stay silent. You will see what I mean in a moment.

LHO OPENS AND RHO BIDS A SUIT AT THE ONE-LEVEL

When LHO opens and RHO bids a suit at the one-level, it is fairly common that you will have a takeout double. There are a few requirements that are special to this case, but not many.

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1♥	?

♠J 10 7 5 ♥A J 7 ♦4 3 ♣K Q J 7

This hand is worth a double of 1♥. It meets the important requirements for doubling when the opponents have bid two suits.

The first requirement is that you have at least four cards in each of the two unbid suits. When you are doubling an opening bid, you can have three cards in one of the unbid suits because there are three unbid suits. Partner has more chances of having a fit in one of your suits. When you are doubling after a one-over-one, there are just two unbid suits, which lessens the chances that your partner will like one of them.

Admittedly, you can break this rule if you have three good cards in one of the unbid suits and extra values, but this rule is a good one to follow for the majority of your hands.

The second requirement is that you have full strength for a takeout double. Don't double with a 9-count. Your partner will often have to bid at the two-level or compete at the three-level. Don't put down a disappointing dummy.

The example hand above is a minimum but adequate double. It has opening bid strength and it has four-card support for the unbid suits. Note that if you don't bid now, you won't have a chance to make a descriptive call later.

♠J 8 7 ♥A J 7 4 ♦K 2 ♣A J 7 3

Pass. You have only three spades, the suit partner will bid more often than not. You have a relatively balanced hand with a worrisome ♦K. Passing this hand is okay. Your partner will be happy to know he can count on you to have the needed shape.

LHO OPENS AND RHO BIDS 1NT

The only item to confirm here is that the double of a 1NT response is for takeout. It is not for penalty. Playing double as penalty is horrible. You lose the ability to make a takeout double, which is bad enough. Worse yet is that you will wait for years for a hand that can double the opponents and then beat them.

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1NT	?

♠K 8 4 ♥K J 10 5 ♦7 5 ♣A Q 8 3

Double. If you would be happy to make a takeout double if your RHO opened 1♦, then it is right to make a takeout double when your LHO opens 1♦ and your RHO bids 1NT. This hand would double an opening bid so it is correct to make a takeout double on this auction as well.

♠Q J 8 2 ♥K J 8 ♦7 6 ♣K Q 7 4

I would pass, although I would double an opening 1♦ bid on my right. The reason for caution here is that the 1NT bid forces us to bid at the two-level. Going back to my rule, if you would be *happy* to double 1♦, you can double the 1NT response. This hand would double 1♦, but it's a minimum hand with nothing special. Judgment is as much a part of bidding as points.

♠Q J 8 2 ♥K J 8 6 ♦7 ♣K Q 7 4

Double. This hand has the same high cards as the previous hand, which I suggested was not worth a double. But the distribution is better and that improvement improves your hand enough to double.

West	North	East	South
1♣	pass	1NT	?
♠ A 2 ♥ A Q J ♦ Q 8 7 5 4 ♣ K Q 6			

Pass. Do not double and do not bid 2♦. Double is for takeout. Your partner will often bid spades, which is not at all what you want. Here is a diagram to consider:

♠ J 6 5 3		
♥ 9 6 5 3		
♦ 10 3 2		
♣ 8 3		
♠ Q 9 7 4		♠ K 10 8
♥ K 7 2		♥ 10 8 4
♦ A 6		♦ K J 9
♣ A 10 9 5	N	♣ J 7 4 2
	W E	
	S	
♠ A 2		
♥ A Q J		
♦ Q 8 7 5 4		
♣ K Q 6		

West has a boring 13-point hand and East has an 8-count. In total, they have 21 HCP, which is about what you would expect. Now. How many tricks will you get if you double 1NT and partner passes? If declarer does good things, he may end up with nine tricks. If he doesn't do anything special, he will still end up with eight tricks. In either case, you will get a terrible result.

Let's say that you double with this misshapen hand and North bids 2♥. Will this be good? Doesn't look good from here. North has six top losers and has two extra spades to worry about. Going down three tricks is likely.

What happens if South passes, as he should? The auction dies in 1NT and the opponents make eight or nine tricks and everyone gets a normal result.

The problem is that South has points but no shape. Points do not automatically take tricks. Points take some tricks, but they work better if there is some shape too. A takeout double promises some of each. You don't double the 1NT response with 8 HCP and 4-4-4-1 distribution and you don't double the 1NT response with 18 points and incorrect distribution. A takeout double promises a combination of the two.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	1NT	?

♠ J 10 8 7 ♥ 2 ♦ A J 10 6 ♣ K Q 8 4

Double for takeout. This is correct regardless of whether 1NT is forcing or not forcing. This hand has the necessary combination of perfect shape and useful high cards. You have only 11 HCP, but you also have two ten spots in your long suits. These have enough value that this hand with 11 HCP should double, while the balanced 18-point South hand from above should pass.

LHO OPENS AND RHO RAISES

In my two books on overcalls and balancing, there is a constant theme. You need to listen to what the opponents are doing and then bid with that in mind. Most players are aware of this to some extent. Take this hand, for instance:

♠ A J 10 8 6 ♥ 8 3 ♦ A 8 3 ♣ Q J 8

If RHO opens 1♦, most players holding this hand will overcall 1♠. If RHO opens 1NT, though, most players will defer with this hand and pass. If RHO opens 2NT, showing 21 or so points, all players will correctly pass with this hand. What is happening is that you are listening to the bidding and judging whether it is safe for you to bid. This is using judgment.

In the same way, when both opponents bid it may be okay for you to make a takeout double with a hand on one bidding sequence and not on another. If the opponents' bidding is relatively weak, you may double for takeout, whereas if they are bidding strongly, you wouldn't. Here is an example:

♠ A 9 5 3 ♥ 2 ♦ K J 9 6 ♣ A 10 9 4

This hand is good enough to double when LHO opens 1♥ and RHO responds 1NT.

It is good enough to double if LHO opens 1♥ and RHO responds 1♠.

It is good enough to double if LHO opens 1♥ and RHO raises to 2♥.

It is not good enough to double if LHO opens 1♠ and RHO bids 2♥. When the opponents make a two-over-one response, they are showing good hands and are giving you fair warning that you should stay out of the bidding.

For the moment, you should realize that when the opponents aren't showing much strength, you should feel better about bidding than when the opponents are bidding strongly. Which leads us up to the key point of this section. Remember it.

NOTE

When both opponents are bidding, the safest sequence in the world for you to bid against is when your LHO opens and your RHO raises to the two-level.

The reasons for this are many.

1. Your RHO is not showing many points. A hand that raises 1♥ to 2♥ shows 6 to 9 support points. It may show as few as 5 HCP.

♠ 8 6 ♥ K 8 4 3 ♦ Q 10 8 3 ♣ 10 9 5

This is a nice minimum raise to 2♥. In other words, a hand that raises partner's suit is not going to be very scary to the other side if they compete.

2. When your opponents raise each other, it means they are in a contract they like. It is important for you to bid when your opponents get to a good spot. If your side allows them to play in 2♥ they will end up in a good contract and you will not enjoy defending against it.
3. This final reason is a little esoteric. Take it on faith. It is a mathematical fact that when the opponents find a fit, your side will have a fit too. The more trumps one side has, the better the chances that the other side will have a good trump suit too. Therefore, if they have a fit, the odds are that your side will have something worth fighting for. Don't worry about the proof of this. But don't be lazy and ignore it either.

Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♣	pass	2♣	?

♠ A J 8 3 ♥ J 4 3 ♦ K Q J 4 ♣ 7 3

This is a nominal takeout double. The hand qualifies only because the bidding tells you that you should bid. You won't bid all the time when the opponents bid and raise, but you should certainly give it thought. If I had this hand after LHO opened 1♣ and RHO responded 1NT, I would accept a pass. This fine distinction is the result of RHO's raise, which is the strongest encouragement you can get to compete.

♠ 8 3 ♥ A Q 8 4 ♦ A Q 10 4 ♣ Q 7 3

Pass. This hand is a reminder that you must have support for all unbid suits. If you double and North bids spades, this will be an unsatisfactory dummy.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	2♥	?

♠ Q 10 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ K Q 8 4 ♣ K J 8 3

Double. If you pass, the bidding may get around to your partner. He will have three or four hearts and bidding won't look like a good idea to him. You have perfect shape so you can take a little liberty with your double. Truly, this sequence is one of the greatest motivations you can have for bidding. Here is the kind of thing you are hoping for.

West	North	East	South
1♥ pass	pass 3♣	2♥ ?	dbl

♠ J 6	♠ A 9 3 2
♥ Q 8 6 2	♥ J 10 5
♦ A 5 3	♦ J 10 6 2
♣ Q 9 6 5	♣ 4 2
♠ K 8 4	♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ A K 9 7 3	♥ 4
♦ 9 7	♦ K Q 8 4
♣ A 10 7	♣ K J 8 3



On these cards, East's 2♥ bid will buy the hand unless you act. If you pass, your partner will also pass. He has nothing worth bidding. If you double, North will bid 3♣ and you will play it there for +110 unless the opponents go to 3♥. In either case, you are better off than if you passed out 2♥.

You, South, have the needed distribution with support for all suits so you have to be the one to take the risk.

Who knows? North is allowed to have a little more. The hand could easily belong to your side. If you pass and let them make 2♥, or even if you set them

a trick, what kind of result do you think you will get if you can make eight or nine tricks in one of your suits?

♠ K 6 4 3 ♥ J 8 6 3 ♦ J 3 2 ♣ A 9 ♠ J 9 8 ♥ A Q 9 7 2 ♦ A 10 ♣ Q 10 7	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 2 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ 9 7 6 5 ♣ 6 5 4 2 ♠ Q 10 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ K Q 8 4 ♣ K J 8 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										

If these are the hands, your side has a mild play for game. Certainly you can make a few spades. Letting them play in 2♥ is going to be a poor result for you. Remember this guideline. It bears repeating. When your opponents bid and raise a suit, it is an excellent time for you to compete. If you have takeout double shape and anything resembling takeout double strength, be heard.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	2♥	?

♠ K 10 6 3 ♥ J 2 ♦ Q 3 ♣ A Q 6 5 4

Pass. Do not double! It is fine to double with a light hand when you have the right shape. It is not fine to double with a light hand of normal strength or even a little more than normal strength when you do *not* have the right shape. Takeout doubles start with shape. This hand does not have it. It does not have the points to get you out of trouble when partner bids diamonds. I promise you that if you pass with hands like this one, your partner will grow to trust you to have a takeout double shape when you double and he will be willing to compete. If you make even one bad takeout double and your partner goes down a bunch as a result of it, you know he will remember the hand for months. Do not set up your partner for a big fall. You don't have to win all the wars. What you want to do is win the ones you start.

ASIDE

Here is an overcalling tip worth knowing when they bid and raise.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	2♥	?

♦ K Q 9 8 3 ♥ 9 7 ♦ 8 3 ♣ A 6 5 4

Bid 2♠. When they bid and raise a suit to the two-level, the auction is very safe for you to make a takeout double. Likewise, when you are able to bid a suit at the two-level, you should consider doing it with hands like this one.

I spent a few hundred pages discussing overcalls in a separate book and recommend *The Complete Book on Overcalls* to you. You will find an entire chapter on the auction above. For now, be aware that the idea of an auction being safe or dangerous for you to bid against applies to both overcalls and takeout doubles.

LHO OPENS AND RHO MAKES A TWO-OVER-ONE RESPONSE

I can summarize the idea of making a takeout double in this case in two words. “Don’t bother.”

This advice is a little strong. You will never have enough high-card points to double but you may have enough shape to get into the bidding.

REMEMBER

The opening bid shows 13 HCP and the two-over-one response usually shows 12 or more. This adds up to 25 HCP for the other side, which leaves your side with 15. This is on a good day. If either of the opponents has an extra point or two, your side may be looking at 14 HCP or less. This is a bad sign.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	2♣	?

♦ K Q 8 3 ♥ K 2 ♦ A J 7 3 ♣ 10 7 3

Pass. You would have doubled an opening 1♥ bid with this hand. You might have doubled if East had raised to 2♥.

Should you double when East bids 2♣ too? Do the arithmetic. You have 13 points. Your partner rates to have a maximum of 2. Okay. Be generous and allow him to have 3, which is not likely. Do you want your side to play this

hand? What if North doesn't have a four-card suit to bid? Could happen. And when it does, you rate to be doubled.

While you are making up your mind, don't forget to consider these two additional dangers. First, your ♥K is poorly placed. West rates to have the high hearts, which means your ♥K is worth less than you are hoping for. Second, North will play at the two-level, not the one-level, which adds a large measure of cost to your adventure when you get doubled.

Let's say you double and let's say the opponents just go on to some final contract. They will know where the high cards are and will play the hand as well as possible.

It doesn't make much sense to bid when you know you will get a bad result for doing so. I suggest that unless you have a mean streak and enjoy watching partner struggle in bad contracts, you forego takeout doubles after two-over-one responses.

When is it okay to double a two-over-one response for takeout?

I promised that you can make a takeout double after a two-over-one. It is true. You can make a takeout double after a two-over-one response. But the meaning of the double is changed, as is the hand you need.

When the bidding starts with a two-over-one, it is given that your side is outgunned in terms of high cards. Even when you have a full 16-point hand, your good luck is going to be negated by your partner's bad luck. It is likely that your 16 points represent all of your side's assets.

Since you can't fight the opponents with high cards, you have to wait for the next best thing, which is extra good distribution. Most players want 5-5 shape for unusual notrump overcalls and Michaels cuebids. The same thing should apply here when you make a takeout double after a two-over-one response by your RHO.

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	2♦	?
♠ 7 ♥ K Q 9 8 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ K Q 10 7 5			

If they are vulnerable and you are not, doubling makes sense. With the opponents showing combined power, you need this kind of hand to double. You can actually double with less as long as you have an understanding partner.

♠ 7 2 ♥ J 10 9 8 7 ♦ 10 ♣ A K J 10 7

This hand is also an acceptable double. It doesn't have the usual points for a takeout double, but it does have good suits and good shape.

Be careful to note the vulnerability when you come in after a two-over-one sequence. When you are vulnerable, you should have especially good suits or even better distribution.

LIFE IS NOT ALWAYS PERFECT WHEN YOU DOUBLE A TWO-OVER-ONE

You should always have the sobering thought that if you double a two-over-one bid with one of these light distributional hands, the opponents will know how to play their contract if they end up declaring. They will know of your shape and announced high cards and will play accordingly. Bidding against a two-over-one response is seldom a free lunch.

Sometimes your bidding decisions will depend on the vulnerability. If you are vulnerable, some of your decisions will have to note that fact.

Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	2♦	?
<p>♠ 3 ♥ A J 8 6 4 ♦ 5 3 ♣ K Q J 7 4</p>			

Double. This is a minimum hand at this vulnerability. The quality of your two suits is very important. Remember that if your partner doesn't have a four-card suit or even a three-card suit to bid, you may get pounded. When partner responds to your takeout double, you must not get serious about this hand. Say you double and partner bids 2♥ and RHO bids 2♣. You should pass. If you absolutely must, raise to 3♥. I wouldn't, though. Your double showed this hand, and if your side should be higher, North is the one who should make that decision.

Also, if North doubles something later in the bidding, you should pass. When you have told partner what you have and partner expresses an opinion, you should accept it.

My feelings about this hand are that when vulnerable, it is fairly futile to come into the bidding when they make a two-over-one. If you suggested to me that you did not like bidding with this hand, you wouldn't get an argument from me. I can see the merits of bidding and the merits of passing. If I were not vulnerable with this hand, and especially if their side were vulnerable, I would bid after their two-over-one bid.

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	2♦	dbl
pass	2♥	2♠	pass
3♠	pass	4♠	pass
pass	dbl	pass	?

♠ 3 ♥ A J 10 6 4 ♦ 5 ♣ K Q 8 7 4 3

Here you have better shape and better spot cards than the hand before. It is fine to double with this hand. When the auction goes to the point that your partner doubles 4♠, you should be happy and pass. If you pull this double, you are effectively accusing your partner of being a fool. He heard your original double and he knows you are bidding with a hand like this one.

If you sit there and think about what to do after partner's double, you will aggravate his ulcer. Even if you do conclude to pass, your partner's equilibrium will be uneven. You showed this hand perfectly when you doubled 2♦.

RESPONDING TO PARTNER'S DOUBLE OF A TWO-OVER-ONE RESPONSE

On the rare occasion when your partner doubles a two-over-one response, you should be ready to do some bidding when you have a proper hand for it. This next hand is a good example. Note that you are East-West.

N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
	1♥	pass	2♣
dbl	2♥	3♠	4♣
pass	5♣	pass	pass
pass			

♠ Q 10 9 7 4
♥ 6 5
♦ K Q J 8 3
♣ 7



♠ K 8 5 3
♥ Q 10 8 3
♦ 5 4 2
♣ 9 8

Here, West makes a thin takeout double with poor high cards but good shape. West is definitely looking at the vulnerability when he makes this double.

East's 3♠ bid is important. It does not show a strong hand. It is a preemptive bid made with the awareness that the opponents own the hand. Jumps are played as preemptive because East will never have a good enough hand to make an invitational jump. Note that East's bid is understood by West to show a weak

hand. Your partnership must be on the same wavelength if you are to use the takeout double after two-over-one bids.

West, therefore, does not bid again.

Hypothetical question

What should East bid if South had raised to 4♥ over 3♠? Should East double 4♥? Should East save in 4♣? Or should East pass?

East should pass if South bids 4♥. East should not double. West's takeout double didn't promise defense. It promised shape. East should be happy to pass 4♥. It turns out that North-South can make 4♥, but they can also make 6♣. The East-West bidding made enough of an impression on North-South that they weren't able to bid their slam. As an aside, you may have worked out that 4♣ would be a good sacrifice bid against 4♥. East-West have done well by harassing North-South's auction.

Let me put takeout doubles after a two-over-one in perspective one final time. Be sure you and your partner are in agreement on this one.

Your side will not be bidding and making games. Your realistic goals are:

1. You may find a good sacrifice.
2. You may cause the opponents to get too high.
3. You may distract the opponents' bidding enough that they miss a game or slam.
4. You may keep the opponents from finding the right suit.
5. You may cause the opponents to miss a notrump contract.

ASIDE

A tip about overcalling when they make a two-over-one response.

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	2♦	?

In the same way that your takeout doubles change against a two-over-one response, your overcalls also change. You know they have the majority of the high-card points, which means that your overcalls have to have a different quality. Here are some hands and thoughts about what you need to bid a suit after the bidding sequence shown here. For the first three hands, assume no one is vulnerable. When the vulnerability is different, your decision to bid has to reflect that fact.

1. ♠ Q 3 ♥ Q J 8 7 5 ♦ A 8 4 ♣ K 5 3

Pass. You have a relatively balanced hand with a marginal suit and wasted high cards facing a partner who could be broke. Bidding 2♥ with this is awful.

2. ♠ 8 6 3 2 ♥ K Q J 8 7 4 ♦ 6 4 ♣ 8

This is the kind of hand you can bid 2♥ with. You have a good six-card suit and you have shape. You have only 6 HCP but you make up for that in winning tricks.

3. ♠ 2 ♥ 8 3 ♦ 10 8 4 ♣ K Q J 10 9 5 3

Bid 3♣. You have sure tricks. That is all you really need. It is true that you might go down three tricks if your partner has nothing. But why should he always be broke when you have just 6 HCP? Further, your 3♣ bid may make it hard for opener since he can't rebid 2♥ or 2♠.

For the next two hands, assume you are not vulnerable and they are vulnerable.

♠ K 4 3 ♥ Q J 10 8 7 5 3 ♦ 8 4 ♣ 3

You have a good, long suit. 2♥ is legal but 3♥ gets the money. This keeps opener from making many important rebids such as 2♠, 2NT, 3♣, or 3♦. If they can double you effectively, that is just bad luck. What you usually see is a pair of confused players struggling to get their auction back on track. If your bid happens to interest your partner, he may be able to add to their confusion.

♠ 3 ♥ K Q J 10 9 ♦ 10 4 ♣ 9 7 6 3 2

Bid 2♥. You want the lead. You are somewhat immune to a penalty double since you have four tricks and need just one more for a successful adventure. This assumes they have a game. Hard to doubt that. And they may have a slam, in which case you do not mind going down four tricks.

WHEN LHO OPENS IN THIRD OR FOURTH SEAT AND HIS PARTNER USES DRURY

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	pass 2♣*	pass dbl

Here is a double that will gain you a lot if you recognize it and your partner is in tune with you. On this sequence, West opens 1♥ in third seat. His partner bids 2♣, which is alerted as Drury, a fairly common and very useful convention.

What the 2♣ bid says is that responder has something like a limit raise. Responder can have three or four hearts for this bid. Basically, this 2♣ bid is an effort to stay in 2♥ if opener is minimum, and it paves the way for game or slam bidding if opener has a real hand. If you run into a Drury auction, you will know it immediately because opener must alert it.

WHAT SHOULD IT MEAN IF YOU DOUBLE 2♣?

Many players play that a double of an artificial bid, such as a Jacoby transfer or a Gerber bid, is lead directing, showing a strong holding in that suit.

When your RHO bids 2♣, Drury, there is a better meaning for double. Use it to say that you would have doubled had they bid 1♥ - pass - 2♥. Here are a few hands to show you what is needed.

A. ♠ A K 4 3 ♥ 4 ♦ J 10 7 5 ♣ Q J 4 3

B. ♠ K J 9 8 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A Q 10 7 ♣ J 10 7

C. ♠ 8 4 ♥ J 7 ♦ Q J 7 5 ♣ K Q J 10 9

With A, you can double 2♣. This is a perfect hand. You would double if the bidding went 1♥ - pass - 2♥.

With B, you can also double 2♣. This is not a perfect takeout hand but it has enough to qualify.

With C, you have to pass if you play that a double is takeout.

Why is using double as a takeout bid a good idea?

1. You will never get in trouble. If your partner has a terrible hand, he will pass the double. Their side will go ahead and bid some number of hearts, which was always their intent.
2. Your partner will know when he can make something and will bid accordingly.
3. Your partner will recognize if pushing them is a good idea.
4. Your partner may judge that saving against 4♥ is a good idea.
5. Your partner may judge to double them if they get overboard.
6. If you pass over 2♣, you may not get a second chance to show your hand.

Here is an example of a benefit to this treatment that is not obvious.

West	North	East	South
		pass	pass
1♥ 2♥	pass pass	2♣* pass	pass ?

You can reopen over 2♥ but you are in some danger since your RHO may have a decent Drury hand. It would have been much better for you to have doubled 2♣, which allows you to get some of your hands out of your system. When you double the Drury 2♣ bid, your partner does not have to bid at all unless he has something. If he has nothing, he can pass because the opponents are not going to play in 2♣.

BIDDING WHEN THEIR SIDE USES DRURY AND OPENER REBIDS HIS MAJOR

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♥	pass
2♣*	pass	2♥	dbl

What should South show with this double? Normally when opener bids and rebids his suit a double is penalty. When they are having a Drury auction, you will never have a penalty double so you can logically play a double as takeout. Partner will know you are a passed hand so he won't go crazy. Basically, you are making a balancing double since opener's bid usually ends the auction.

♠ A 8 7 4 ♥ 4 ♦ 10 9 8 5 ♣ A J 6 3

You have takeout double shape but not enough to double 1♥. When opener shows a minimum hand with his 2♥ bid, you can double that for takeout. Some dangers here, but in the long run you will gain a lot whenever you find partner with a fit and some points. He usually will oblige you.

ASIDE

A tip about overcalling when they bid 2♣, Drury.

You saw that you can double a Drury bid for takeout of the major they are bidding. You can be fairly free in overcalling at the two-level. They will hesitate to double you because they know they have a fit, and that will encourage them towards continuing the bidding. Here is one example hand. Assume no one is vulnerable.

West	North	East	South
		pass	pass
1♠	pass	2♣*	?

♠ 9 7 5 3 ♥ K Q J 8 4 ♦ K 5 3 ♣ 8

Bid 2♥. You know they have a good spade fit. Your four spades tell you that your partner is short in spades and he may have some hearts for you. If you bid 2♥, you get your partner off to a good lead and you may inconvenience their Drury methods.

CHAPTER FIVE DELAYED DOUBLES — TAKEOUT OR PENALTY?

There are many forms of takeout doubles that are as important as the immediate takeout double, but different enough that they require separate discussion. A delayed takeout double occurs when you pass or bid something at your first turn to bid, and then double later. There are many situations where a delayed takeout double can be used. These will be covered in the following pages.

YOUR RHO OPENS AND REBIDS HIS SUIT AFTER A ONE-LEVEL RESPONSE BY HIS PARTNER. YOU DOUBLE. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Here are some auctions where opener bids a suit and rebids his suit after hearing from his partner. In all of these cases, you double. Do you have a feeling for what your doubles mean in all of the following auctions?

Is your double for takeout?

Is your double for penalty?

What is the rule that applies?

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	1♥	pass
		2♥	dbl
West	North	East	South
1NT	pass	1♠	pass
		2♠	dbl

On these two auctions, opener bid a major and rebid his major. He promises six cards but he has no assurance that his partner has any support. I suggest that a double by you is penalty.

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	1♣	pass
		2♣	dbl

On this auction, West bid a suit. It is possible that West has shortness in his partner's minor suit. Doubling 2♣ for penalty makes sense.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass
1NT	pass	2♦	dbl

On this auction responder bid 1NT, which is a strong hint that he has a few cards in partner's minor suit. He did not bid a major so West usually will have two or more cards for partner. A double here should be for takeout, showing a weakish hand that does not want to pass it out in two of their minor suit.

When you play, you will see that most of your opponents don't know what these doubles mean. Next time someone doubles you in the middle of an auction, at the end of the bidding ask what the double meant and you will often get an Alice in Wonderland answer.

If you can't wait for your next bridge session, call your partner and ask what these doubles mean. Does your partner know? Do you? Are you on the same wavelength? Is your partnership afraid to use these doubles just to avoid disaster?

Here is a summary of the examples I showed above. It will be quite useful for you to check with partner to see if he agrees with you. Even if you choose to have a different definition, that is okay as long as you know what you are doing.

1. If opener bids a major and rebids it after a one-level bid from his partner, a double by you is for penalty.
2. If opener bids a minor and rebids it after a suit bid by his partner, a double by you is for penalty.
3. If opener bids a minor and rebids it after a 1NT response, a double by you is for takeout.

Here are some examples showing these agreements at work.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	pass
1NT	pass	2♦	dbl

♦ A J 10 7 3 ♥ 9 6 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ Q 10 2

The opponents have a likely misfit. A double of 2♦ is for penalty. This is logical. If double is for takeout, why didn't you double East's 1♠ bid? Do you really have a hand good enough to get partner to the three-level? I doubt it.

You have five, maybe six tricks in your own hand plus the hope that your partner can contribute a little something. The opponents' bidding suggests limited values, so partner is a favorite to have some high cards.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	pass
1♠	pass	2♥	dbl

♠ 7 ♥ K Q 10 6 5 ♦ K Q J ♣ A 10 9 2

This hand is appropriate for a double of 2♥. Note that you are not worried that they will run to spades. If they do, your partner's spades may be better than your hearts. Note also that you don't double with a bunch of hearts and nothing else.

♠ 6 2 ♥ Q J 9 7 6 5 ♦ K Q J 3 ♣ 3

Pass. If you double 2♥ with this hand you will probably beat them. But if they run, you don't have much defense. The best thing that can happen to you is for them to play in hearts. Don't warn them away unless you can handle their other contracts too.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass
1♥	pass	2♣	dbl

♠ 6 ♥ A Q 8 ♦ A J 8 3 ♣ K Q 9 8 4

I think this double should be for penalty. If you had a takeout hand you could have bid over 1♣. West, by the way, has an unlimited hand.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass
1NT	pass	2♣	dbl

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
1NT	pass	2♦	dbl

These are the only sequences where double should be for takeout after opener rebids his suit. The 1NT bid denies a major suit so it implies length in the minor suits. When opener rebids his minor after a 1NT response, it is odds on that they have a fit. Also, since this sequence rates to end the auction, it is okay for you to double. Think of it as a balancing double.

♠ J 10 7 4 ♥ A 9 8 3 ♦ K J 3 2 ♣ 6

If East opens 1♣ and rebids 2♣ after a 1NT response, you should double it. They surely have a club fit so your double cannot be for penalty. What you have is a hand with shape that is afraid that the bidding might stop in 2♣. By doubling for takeout, you keep your partnership in the game.

If your partner is awake, he will remember that you did not bid over 1♣. He will know you don't have enough strength to come in on the first round.

Importantly, you know that if you pass over 2♣, your partner will probably pass too since he won't have good distribution. You can double with this and partner will bid his suit.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF YOU PASS AND DOUBLE WHEN RHO RAISES HIS PARTNER?

West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass
1♥	pass	2♥	?

This is a common sequence. You should be aware of it and be ready for it. Of all the auctions where you have a good hand and can't bid on the first round, this is the one that will most often give you a second chance.

♠ Q J 10 6 ♥ 8 ♦ K Q J 8 ♣ A 10 6 4

Double. Here you are with an opening bid, all ready for action. Had East passed, you were going to open. East's 1♣ presents a problem. You know you have a good hand but right now, there is no way to show it. Doubling is awful, as usual. Doubling without support for one of the missing suits is not good bridge. You might bid 1♦ or 1♣, but there is a better approach that might let you do everything. As you can see in the bidding diagram, South passed 1♣. Momentarily, South is silent, and if the bidding goes poorly he may remain silent. But if all goes well, South can do something. On the actual auction, West bids 1♥ and East raises to 2♥. Now South can double. It is South's first opportunity to double hearts, so by any definition, the double is for takeout. Since the bidding is still 'live,' meaning that West hasn't limited his hand, and since your side is committed to the two- or three-level, you must have full strength to make a takeout double. This is not a balancing auction.

♠ Q J 10 ♥ 8 2 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ A J 7 6 4

Pass. Passing and doubling shows full strength for a double, which you have, plus good holdings in the unbid suits, which you don't have. You need four cards in spades and diamonds. Remember, your partner may have to go to 3♦ on a four-bagger. Make him happy.

♠ Q 8 7 5 ♥ 8 ♦ K J 7 2 ♣ K Q 7 2

This hand is as marginal as they come. Since you have excellent shape, doubling is barely okay.

♠ K 8 7 5 ♥ 8 2 ♦ K J 7 2 ♣ K J 7

Pass. Yes, you have 4-4 in the unbid suits, but your points are minimum and your shape is worse. The bidding is hardly over. For all you know, West has a good hand. You need full values for a belated takeout double and you need four cards in each of the two unbid suits.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF YOU PASS AND DOUBLE WHEN RHO REBIDS 1NT?

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

There are two sensible meanings for this double. You can play that it shows a penalty double of 1NT or you can play it as a takeout double of the suit bid on your left. I suggest the takeout meaning since it is consistent with most of these doubles. You will have fewer accidents if you keep your rules simple and have few or no exceptions.

Eddie Kantar taught me the value of this. He gave me a list of rules which covered many bidding situations. It was nice, when something new came along, to have a rule to fall back on.

♠ 7 4 ♥ A J 6 2 ♦ 9 8 2 ♣ A K 9 6

Double. This is about right. You have opening bid strength and good holdings in the unbid suits. You could not double 1♦ because that would show spade support. Having passed and heard opener rebid 1NT, you can double to show the two unbid suits, hearts and clubs.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE

If you play the takeout version of this double, you will usually have shortness in spades, the suit bid on your left. You usually have three or four cards in opener's suit.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF YOU PASS AND DOUBLE WHEN RHO REBIDS A NEW SUIT?

West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass
1♥	pass	1♠	dbl

Don't wait up for this one. I mention the possibility only because if I didn't, someone might think I overlooked it. In theory, you are making a takeout double of spades, showing the other three suits, *including* clubs and hearts. You will have a hand much like this one:

♠ 8 ♥ A 8 7 3 ♦ K Q 10 6 ♣ A J 7 4

Partner is invited to bid any of the other three suits. Fortunately, you are unlikely to hear this sequence. If it does occur, though, this is what it shows.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF YOU PASS AND DOUBLE WHEN RHO REVERSES OR JUMP SHIFTS?

This is an odd one. When opener makes a strong rebid, there is no chance that your side will want to play the hand. The only question is whether you should make a lead directing double.

One of the banes of new players is that they make gratuitous doubles that can't serve a purpose other than to be heard. Things like this happen:

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
1♥	pass	3♣	?

What do you do with this hand?

♠ J 10 5 3 ♥ 8 ♦ Q J 5 ♣ K Q 9 6 5

The right bid is to pass and let the opponents do what they want to do. They may end in notrump or in hearts but some of the time opener has diamonds

and clubs and is looking for club support. Doubling 3♣ may deprive you of the chance to double 5♣. Also, if you double 3♣ and opener ends in 3NT you have given him some useful information.

There is a slight chance that a reverse bid is a phony bid. You may wish to double one of these when your holding in the suit is so strong that you know the enemy reverse was not for real. For that to happen, you need a scenario like the following.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
1♠	pass	2♥	?

♠ 8 6 3 ♥ K Q J 10 7 ♦ J 3 ♣ 10 8 4

If you must do something, doubling with this hand is exciting, but probably okay. East usually ends up raising spades or someone on their side bids notrump. In this case, a heart lead from partner is the only thing you are interested in. Note, for future reference, that they may be cold for 2♥ or even 3♥. All you have is four heart tricks. Where do you expect two more to come from?

This hand caused a stir when it came up:

Both vul.

♠ A 9 8 7 3	
♥ 6	
♦ 10 8 2	
♣ K 7 6 5	
♠ K Q 6	♠ J 10 5 4
♥ 8 7	♥ J 10 9 4 3
♦ K Q 9 7 6 4	♦ —
♣ Q 8	♣ 10 9 4 3
♠ 2	
♥ A K Q 5 2	
♦ A J 5 3	
♣ A J 2	

N
 W E
 S

West	North	East	South
			1♥
pass	1♠	pass	3♦
dbl	redbl	pass	pass
pass			

West led with the ♠K and watched the opponents make an overtrick. South knew diamonds were breaking badly so he never led one. He crossruffed the

hand instead. West could have held the contract to nine tricks, but got careless when he saw that he wasn't going to set it. Minus 1240 was worth what you would expect.

Why did West double? I think it was an emotional response rather than a thought out one. It was certainly an expensive statement. The worst thing was that without the double, the opponents would have kept on bidding. Who knows where they would end up? 3NT can make, but it could go down. In many cases, East-West got a plus score. But not this East-West.

Of more importance is that you do not have any takeout doubles occurring when you pass opener's bid and later double a reverse or a jump shift. Silence is the norm, and probably that is for the best.

YOU OPEN, THE OPPONENTS BID, AND YOU DOUBLE

There are two parts to this. If your partner bids something during the auction, then your double will be for penalty or it will be some sort of artificial bid such as a support double. It will not be for takeout.

The second part is the focus of this section. You open and the opponents bid and your partner is silent throughout. When you double, what does it mean?

Below is a list of auctions where you open and later double something. Look over this list and decide on your answers to these questions.

What does South's double mean in these sequences?

What kind of hand does South have?

How much strength does South need?

a)	West	North	East	South
			1♥	1♣ dbl
	dbl	pass		
b)	West	North	East	South
			pass	1♣ dbl
	1♥	pass		
c)	West	North	East	South
			2♥	1♣ dbl
	1♥	pass		
d)	West	North	East	South
			1NT	1♣ dbl
	1♥	pass		

e)	West	North	East	South
	1NT	pass	pass	1♥ dbl
f)	West	North	East	South
	1♥	pass	2♦	1♣ dbl
g)	West	North	East	South
	1♥	pass	2♦	1♦ dbl
h)	West	North	East	South
	pass	pass	2♦	1♥ dbl

Answers to bidding sequences

a)	West	North	East	South
	dbl	pass	1♥	1♣ dbl

South's double is takeout. This is a frequent auction. Opener has a good hand with short hearts and is making a takeout double of his own. Opener's partner implied weakness since he did not bid over the takeout double. Opener will have 14 or more quality HCP along with takeout double shape.

♠ A J 7 3 ♥ 3 ♦ K Q 10 ♣ A J 10 7 6

South should double with this hand. West's takeout double does not mean your side can't make anything. You shouldn't fret that West has four spades. He might have just three, in which case your side can have a 4-4 fit. It is also possible that your LHO made a misguided takeout double with only two spades. It would be a shame to let an opponent talk you out of a spade fit that way.

♠ A Q 7 ♥ K J 7 ♦ A K 5 ♣ J 7 4 3

Do you feel the urge to bid? If you must, bid 1NT. This shows an 18- to 19-point hand that would have jumped to 2NT had partner responded to your 1♣ bid. Since partner didn't bid, you can bid just 1NT to show the same hand. The one thing you shouldn't do is double. Your partner will bid 2♣ a lot of the time and you will hate it. Try very hard not to double with incorrect distribution.

b)	West	North	East	South
				1♣
	1♥	pass	pass	dbl

Double is for takeout. Most players use negative doubles, in which case South is expected to reopen whenever his distribution suggests North is waiting with a big heart stack. Double doesn't promise any extra values.

If you do not use negative doubles, opener needs two or three additional points to come back in with a double. This example hand is a minimum double if your partnership does not use negative doubles:

♠ A Q 4 ♥ 3 ♦ K Q 8 2 ♣ Q J 10 7 4

Assume you are using negative doubles for the rest of these examples.

The rest of these example hands assume you are using negative doubles. This is one of the best conventions in the world and if you are going to get maximum value from it, you need to know what opener does when an overcall is passed back to him.

♠ K 9 4 ♥ 3 2 ♦ A J 8 ♣ K Q 6 5 3

This minimum hand is worth a double if you are using negative doubles. Your shape suggests partner has a penalty double and is waiting for you to reopen. Your distribution is the key to deciding when to bid on many auctions like this one.

♠ A 7 4 ♥ J 8 3 2 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ Q J 10

This hand has four hearts. This makes it clear that your partner does not have a lot of hearts. He rates to have a poor hand else he would have bid something. You should pass this hand. If you had three hearts, you would still pass. In general, when you reopen with a double you have one or two of their suit or you have a huge hand.

c)	West	North	East	South
				1♣
	1♥	pass	2♥	dbl
	♠ Q J 9	♥ 6	♦ A Q 8 2	♣ A Q J 8 2

South's double is for takeout. South has no reason to hope for North to have a big hand so he needs 2 or 3 extra points to act freely. If South had a fourth spade he could double with a point less.

d)	West	North	East	South
				1♣
	1♥	pass	1NT	dbl

Double is for takeout. Remember the auction from earlier in the book? LHO opened a suit and RHO bid 1NT and you doubled. The double was for takeout. It is the same here.

♠ K Q J 3 ♥ 4 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ A 10 9 8 5

This hand is okay for a takeout double. Note that there is a chance that your partner has a good hand. He could have some hearts and points and might be hoping to double hearts. If he has that kind of hand, he will pass your double for penalty. He should know, though, that you are asking him to bid.

♠ Q J ♥ K J 8 3 ♦ A K J ♣ K J 9 8

Congratulations if you passed. Your heart holding tells you that North doesn't have a heart stack. Your points tell you that partner is broke. Your spades tell you that you don't want to hear North bid spades. Be sad that you didn't get to a game or a slam, but be pleased you avoided trouble.

e)	West	North	East	South
				1♥
	1NT	pass	pass	dbl

This double is penalty. How can it be for takeout? Are you showing four suits and asking partner to bid one of them? You would need fifteen or sixteen cards in order to have support for whatever partner bids. No. Double is penalty. You show 18 or 19 points or thereabouts. Also, since your partner is going to lead a heart, you want to be ready for it.

♠ A 6 ♥ Q J 10 8 7 ♦ A K Q ♣ Q 10 8

This is the kind of hand you need for a double. Make sure your partner knows, too. Be aware that this is actually a minimum hand for this double.

f)	West	North	East	South
				1♣
	1♥	pass	2♦	dbl

♠ A K J 7 ♥ 4 3 ♦ K 3 ♣ A J 10 9 6

Another takeout double. You are showing good spades, but since partner may have to bid 3♣ without a single point, you are also showing a good hand.

g)	West	North	East	South
				1♦
	1♥	pass	2♦	dbl

What does it mean when you double a cuebid? Are you showing a big general-purpose hand? Are you showing good diamonds? Or are you making a takeout double of hearts?

You can get many opinions on what this double means. There are two treatments that make good sense.

1. **♠ K Q 10 6 ♥ 4 ♦ A J 8 7 3 ♣ K Q 7**

The first possible meaning for double is that it is takeout. This hand would double if it was understood to be a takeout of hearts. Don't double just because you have the shape. You need shape plus a little extra to double here. Partner didn't bid over 1♥, so you have an inference that he may be broke.

2. **♠ K 4 ♥ 8 7 ♦ A Q J 10 8 ♣ K Q 7 3**

The second possible meaning for double is that you have good diamonds *and* a willingness to have partner compete to 3♦ if he wishes. This is a reasonable treatment. The hand here has good diamonds and good playing strength, but isn't good enough to bid 3♦ itself. If you play double as showing diamonds and an interest in competing, you can double with this. You can only use one of these treatments, though, so you need to clarify your methods with your partner.

Keeping these two treatments in mind, here are some hands that *should not* double East's 2♦ cuebid.

♠ K J 3 ♥ Q 7 2 ♦ A Q 7 6 ♣ K Q J

If you choose one of these two meanings for doubling the cuebid, you have to pass when you have a hand like this. Passing isn't really so bad when you consider that LHO has an overcall and RHO has 10 or more points. Your best result is likely to be minus 110 against 2♥.

♠ Q 8 3 ♥ K 3 ♦ A K J 10 3 ♣ J 9 3

You have to pass over 2♦. This hand is too weak for double, regardless of which meaning you choose. If you allow hands like this one to get away, you will gain on the other occasions when you double the cuebid and partner gets into the bidding.

NOTE – Many players double 2♦ with this hand on the theory that they are telling partner it is okay to lead diamonds. This treatment has some merit and you can use it if you wish. My choice is not to use this treatment but I would not argue about it.

h)	West	North	East	South
			1♥	
	pass	pass	2♦	dbl

♠ A J 7 ♥ K Q J 8 5 ♦ 7 ♣ A J 9 3

This is a takeout double. Classic. North is broke, but given you have a good hand with shape there is no reason not to compete. Doubling is better than bidding 2♥ or 3♣. Here is a possible hand for your partner:

♠ 9 8 6 5 3 ♥ 2 ♦ Q 9 5 3 ♣ 8 6 4

Doubling gets you to 2♠, usually making, possibly with an overtrick. Bidding 2♥ gets you to 2♥, which will be awkward. Bidding 3♣ gets you to 3♣, which is no better. Passing gets you to 2♦ by East, which won't be worth much either.

Do not overlook the takeout double. Be sure to have takeout shape when you double. Doubling just to show points is a sure loser. Be willing to surrender on hands with flat distribution. Passing sometimes requires more bravery than bidding, but the results are worth it.

In closing this discussion, here is an example hand to show you how far opener can go after opening and then later making a takeout double.

Both vul.

West	North	East	South
			1♥
pass	pass	1♠	dbl
2♠	pass	pass	dbl

♠ 6 ♥ A 9 8 7 3 ♦ A K J ♣ A K J 7

Your 1♥ bid got a disappointing response from partner, but your hand is good enough to double 1♠ for takeout. This double shows a good hand since it means you are willing to play at the two-level opposite a known weak hand. When West raised to 2♠, North had a second chance and still declined to do anything. South's second double is also takeout. This is logical. If South thought he could double 2♠ for penalty, why was he making a takeout double of 1♠?

YOUR OPPONENT OPENS AND YOU OVERCALL. IF YOU DOUBLE LATER, IS IT FOR PENALTY OR TAKEOUT?

As is frequently the case, it depends on what partner did. If he has bid, a double by you will usually be for penalty, or some kind of action double. I am not going to discuss sequences where partner bids, however. This discussion covers hands where you bid something and later double. How can partner tell what you mean?

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♠
2♣	pass	pass	dbl

♠ K Q 10 7 3 ♥ A K 2 ♦ K 9 8 ♣ 8 4

Double is takeout. This kind of hand is common. Your RHO opens and you have a hand like this one; a good five-card suit and sort of takeout double shape. I discussed in the first section why it was right to start with 1♠. It used to be that double was the right bid, but experience has shown that it leads to trouble. Overcalling is right, and the main question is whether to compete if partner passes.

On this sequence, LHO raised opener and it came back to you. A double now announces that your overcall is a good one *and* that you also have a fair support for the other two suits. If double is known to be for takeout, it is superior to passing or bidding 2♠. Here is a likely layout:

♠	4 2
♥	10 9 7
♦	Q J 7 6 4
♣	Q 5 3
♠	K Q 10 7 3
♥	A K 2
♦	K 9 8
♣	8 4

Note how well the double worked. It got your side into diamonds, which would be hard to do otherwise. In diamonds, you will probably make eight tricks. You might even make nine. In spades, however, you will be lucky to make seven. More likely, you will make less. Also, selling out to 2♦ will get you a minus score.

There are variations on this double, but this is the only one that comes up a lot. It is a good item to have in your bag because it lets you distinguish this kind of a hand from a hand with genuine takeout shape.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	2♣
2♦	pass	pass	?

♠J 7 2 ♥A J 7 ♦3 ♣A Q 10 9 7 6

Double. The same principle applies when you overcall in a minor and then double.

Because you bid 2♣ before doubling, there is an inference that you have a six-card suit.

When you overcall in a major suit and then double, the inference is that you have a five-bagger.

West	North	East	South
3♦ ¹	pass	1♦	1♥

1. Preemptive

♠A 6 3 ♥A J 10 7 6 ♦3 ♣A J 7 5

This double is also for takeout. Your shape is about what is expected and your values are about what you need.

If West had bid 4♦, passed back to you, a double of that would also be for takeout.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	1♥
1♠	pass	2♦	dbl

♠ 8 3 ♥ A K 8 4 3 ♦ 3 2 ♣ K Q J 7

Double is takeout. You have a good enough hand to consider bidding again. Double lets partner choose the best spot, assuming there is one.

CHAPTER SIX

RESPONDING WHEN PARTNER DOUBLES A ONE-BID

Chapters six, seven, and eight show hands where LHO opens and partner doubles. RHO may or may not bid. Chapter nine will show hands where RHO opens and LHO bids and your partner doubles for takeout.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	?

When your partner doubles the opening bid, asking you to bid, you need to know what is expected of you. I will discuss responding to a takeout double at length. First, however, I want to show you a major difference between bidding when your partner doubles and bidding when your partner overcalls. This next discussion is important. Read it and be sure you are aware of what it all means. Overcalling auctions and takeout double auctions are worlds apart.

HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND TO PARTNER'S OVERCALL?

If your partner overcalls you have the option to pass. If you bid something, you promise some points. For example:

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	pass	?

If you raise to 2♥, you show around 6 to 10 support points.

If you respond 1♠, you show a fair five-card suit with around 7 to 11 points.

If you bid 1NT, you show about 8 to 11 points.

If you pass, you deny the ability to make a bid. A pass can actually be made on some 9- or 10-point hands but in general, passing shows a bad hand.

Contrast this with the situation when partner makes a takeout double.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	?

If you bid 1♦, you promise nothing.

If you bid 1♥, you promise nothing.

If you bid 1♠, you promise nothing.

If you bid 1NT, you promise something. (See elsewhere in this section for exact details on the 1NT response.)

The big deal here is:

When you respond to an overcall, you show some values.

When you make a simple response to a takeout double, you promise nothing.

MORE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESPONDING TO A TAKEOUT DOUBLE AND TO AN OVERCALL

You will do more bidding after partner's takeout double than after any other action he may take. You know your partner has values and you know in general what his shape is.

When partner doubles he is offering you five potential places to play: the three unbid suits, to a lesser degree, notrump, and the rare hand where you choose to pass and defend.

In comparison, if partner overcalls, he is offering only his suit and perhaps a notrump contract.

There are lots of things you might do after partner's takeout double. This long section discusses many of them. When your partner doubles, your RHO may do something. Each of his possible actions puts the auction in a different light. Here are the things that RHO can do after your partner's double.

- RHO may pass.
- RHO may raise opener to the two-level.
- RHO may raise opener to the three-level.
- RHO may use the Jordan 2NT bid to raise opener.
- RHO may raise opener to the four-level.
- RHO may bid a new suit at the one-level.
- RHO may bid a new suit at the two-level.
- RHO may bid 1NT.
- RHO may redouble.

RESPONDING TO THE TAKEOUT DOUBLE WHEN RHO PASSES

Since a takeout double is the most common start of a competitive auction, I know you have encountered most or all of the things on the list. Here is how you should bid when RHO passes.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	?

When partner doubles and RHO passes, you get a free run. This doesn't happen too often, so enjoy your moment in the sun. You will find as you play against better and better opponents that when your partner doubles, your RHO tends to get busy in the auction. Here is an example of how aggressive you need to be when responding to a takeout double.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	?
♠ 8 4 ♥ K J 8 3 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ Q 10 6 4			

You won't mind bidding 1♥ at all with this. More importantly, how would you feel about this hand if your RHO had bid 1♣, 1NT, or perhaps raised to 2♦? Are you willing to bid 2♥? You should.

I don't like to have my opponents in the bidding. Neither should you.

MINIMUM RESPONSES TO A TAKEOUT DOUBLE

When partner doubles for takeout you will have many possible responses. Much of the time you will bid a suit as cheaply as possible. There is very little to say about this except that you must be careful to bid the full value of your hand. If you have enough for a stronger bid, you should make that bid. Here are some hands and a few thoughts. Note that you should be thinking of what you will bid now, and also be thinking of how the bidding may continue.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	?
A. ♠ 8 7 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ J 7 6 3 ♣ Q 8 7 3			

Bid 1♦. As bad as this hand is, you should appreciate that you do have a four-card suit to bid, an honor in it, and a doubleton. The only point of this hand is to put your bad luck in perspective. It could be worse.

B.	♠ K J 7 6 4 ♥ 8 7 4 ♦ J 10 4 ♣ 7 4
----	--

Bid 1♠. You don't have enough for a stronger bid but you really do have an excellent hand. You have a five-card major, which is a good thing to have when partner makes a takeout double. In addition, you have 5 HCP which are in the suits partner is asking for. You don't have a single wasted point in clubs, the suit opener bid. That's not all. You have the ♦10, a useful pusher. You should bid 1♠.

and be prepared to bid 2♠ if necessary. You will not let the opponents buy this hand at the two-level. Compare this hand with the following hand.

C. ♠ J 7 6 4 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ K 10 2

Bid 1♠. This hand has the same number of high-card points as the previous hand, but it isn't worth a third as much. This hand has only four spades and it has high cards in the suit opener bid. It also has terrible shape. You won't bid again with this hand unless partner does something dramatic.

The following diagrams show the two previous hands opposite a possible takeout double hand. The North hand shows a normal double of 1♣.

♠ A 9 5 3
♥ K Q 6
♦ A 9 8 2
♣ 9 3
[redacted]
♠ K J 7 6 4
♥ 8 7 4
♦ J 10 4
♣ 7 4

The hands above show hand B opposite a possible minimum takeout double. How many tricks do you expect to take? Keep in mind that the player on your left opened the bidding and will have most of the missing high cards. Knowing where the high cards are, you rate to lose two clubs, one heart, one diamond, and maybe one spade. You will make eight or nine tricks in spades.

♠ A 9 5 3
♥ K Q 6
♦ A 9 8 2
♣ 9 3
[redacted]
♠ J 7 6 4
♥ J 7 4
♦ 7 6 3
♣ K 10 2

This second pair of hands, using hand C above, is a different story. You have 5 HCP again, but you are missing the extra features of the first hand. In this setup, you have two probable spade losers, one heart loser, two sure diamond losers, and in the fullness of time you will lose two club tricks if opener has the

♦A, as you suspect. You expect to take six or seven tricks when spades divide 3-2. If spades are 4-1, it will be worse. The extra trump and the useful location of the high cards on the first hand make it worth two or three tricks more than the second hand.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	?

♠ 8 6 ♥ Q 10 6 4 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ A J 7 3

Bid 1♥. The only issue on this hand is that you should bid 1♥ and not 1NT. When you have a four-card major, you should always show it in preference to bidding notrump. This hand is good enough that you will bid again if necessary.

♠ J 8 7 3 ♥ 8 5 ♦ K J 8 7 ♣ J 6 3

Bid 1♣, not 1♦. Partner is mainly asking for the majors. You should oblige.

IMPORTANT – The next hand shows a useful bidding strategy that you can use when your partner makes a takeout double and you have two four-card majors without enough strength to make a strong bid. This usually means you have up to 8 HCP.

♠ K 10 7 4 ♥ Q 9 8 2 ♦ 8 3 ♣ J 8 4

Bid 1♣. If your partner had opened 1♣, you would respond 1♥, leaving him room to rebid 1♣. When your partner makes a takeout double, your bidding is different. After a takeout double, you should respond in the *higher-ranking* of two four-card suits. If the auction goes favorably for you, you will later bid 2♥ to give partner a choice.

♠ 7 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ K 9 8 3 ♣ J 9 7 6 3

Bid 1♦. You have two other choices. You can pass for penalty or you can respond 1NT. Both of these stink. When you pass for penalty, you need a solid trump suit. If your partner has a normal takeout double with 13 or so HCP and a singleton club, the opponents will still have the majority of the points and the majority of the clubs. Plus, declarer's clubs will be sitting over yours. My estimate is that they will make overtricks in 1♣ doubled. Bidding 1NT is equally repulsive. You have 4 HCP and your partner is promising 12 or 13. He may have more, but you are not entitled to assume that. If he has 13, your side will

have a total of 17. 1NT will be a bad contract. If doubled, it will be a very bad contract. Much better to bid 1♦. It is innocuous and is safer than bidding 1NT.

♠ 8 7 ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ J 9 2 ♣ Q 10 8 4 3

This hand was given to a panel of experts. They all agreed that passing 1♣ doubled was madness. The estimate of the panel was that passing would reward you with minus 240 or 340. The almost unanimous choice was 1♦. The idea is that this bid avoids getting you a big minus against 1♣ and it leaves partner room to get his good hands out of his system. Remember that your 1♦ bid does not show points. It just shows diamonds. If your partner bids again, he has to have a big hand.

Yes, you may end up going down in some contract, but it is also possible that your side will not get too high or that the opponents will keep bidding and play the hand themselves. In all cases, you will have avoided the immediate disaster of letting them play in 1♣ doubled, making some overtricks.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	?

♠ 7 5 ♥ 10 9 7 4 ♦ Q 7 ♣ J 8 6 5 2

As always, give your emphasis to bidding a major. Bid 1♥. There are two good reasons for this. The first is that bidding clubs requires you go to the two-level. The second is that partner is promising the majors and only suggesting a minor. It is possible that North doubled with just two clubs. For this reason, you should exercise a *small* caution about responding in a minor suit. On this hand you have a major suit, so you don't have to look further.

♠ 8 6 5 ♥ J 3 ♦ 7 4 3 2 ♣ K 10 8 3

Bid 2♣. When you have no alternative, go right ahead and bid the minor. Just because partner may have doubled without full support for a minor is not cause for you to be paranoid about bidding clubs. In practice, North will have club support most of the time.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	?

♠ K 5 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ K Q 7 6 3

Bid 2♣. This is a good hand. If it were any better, you would make a stronger response. One small item of note is that you should not bid 1NT. There is no need to bid notrump with ♥1032. If notrump is going to be the right place to play you will get another bid out of partner, in which case you will show your maximum.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	pass	?
<p>♠ 9 7 3 2 ♥ Q 8 ♦ J 10 7 4 ♣ 10 8 4</p>			

Bid 2♦. You don't have a true spade stopper. In any event, you have a decent four-card diamond suit. The important thing about this hand is that the opening bid was 1♠. You can see that responding to a takeout double of 1♠ gets you kind of high. You can't bid a suit at the one-level where you are not likely to get doubled. You have to go to the two-level, like it or not. When you are thinking about doubling a 1♠ opener for takeout, remember that your partner will have to bid at the two-level with poor hands like this one.

THE 1NT RESPONSE

What does it take to respond 1NT when partner makes a takeout double?

The first thing you need is a stopper in opener's suit, although I can imagine faking it in an extreme case.

The second thing you need is some points. Having a stopper is not, by itself, enough to bid notrump.

So how many points do you need to bid 1NT?

Would you believe the range is from 4 to 10 points? You might bid 1NT with an 11-count in a pinch. The reason for this range is based on a combination of self-preservation and optimism. Note this distinction. When your partner opens the bidding he hopes you will bid, but you can pass if you wish. There is no visible disaster waiting for you when you pass partner's opening bid. When your partner makes a takeout double and RHO passes you are expected to bid, whether you want to or not. If you have a poor hand you can't pass because that will allow the opponents to make a doubled contract, often with overtricks.

Passing a takeout double with a poor hand is dangerous. In other words, the consequences of passing an opening bid are not the same as passing a takeout double. This reasoning is what leads to a wide range for a 1NT response. If you have a 4-count with a stopper and nothing else remotely worth bidding, you may have to bid 1NT. If you have a crummy 10-count, you may also choose to bid 1NT if there isn't a comfortable stronger bid available. The following question will help define the problem.

What suit did opener bid?

The range of points you show for a 1NT response varies according to the suit your partner doubled. This is because you have more alternatives when partner doubles 1♣ than when he doubles 1♠.

Here are the ranges that I suggest. Do not become enamored of these ranges. Just use them as a guideline.

- If partner doubles 1♣, you promise around 8 to 11 for 1NT.
- If partner doubles 1♦, you promise around 7 to 11 for 1NT.
- If partner doubles 1♥, you promise around 6 to 11 for 1NT.
- If partner doubles 1♠, you promise around 5 to 11 for 1NT, but it is possible that you have even less if you do not have a four-card suit you can bid.

These examples will show why the ranges for 1NT vary so much.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	?

When partner doubles 1♣, your 1NT response shows a fair hand of about 8 to 11 points. The reason you need such a good hand for 1NT after a 1♣ opening is that you have lots of alternatives. You do not *have* to bid notrump unless you want to.

♠J 9 3 ♥J 8 4 ♦K J 8 3 ♣K J 9

You could bid 1♦ or 2♦, but a 1NT bid shows a balanced hand with a club stopper or two, and is forward going. 1NT shows your hand better than bidding a suit.

♠J 9 3 ♥8 7 3 ♦9 8 7 3 ♣K J 9

Bid 1♦. With this weak a hand, you don't have to bid notrump. 1♦ won't end the bidding, and even if it does, that won't bother you. Note that if you bid 1♦, you can always get to notrump if that is right. If you bid 1NT and the right contract was 1♦, you can't go backwards.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	?

The higher-ranking the opponent's suit, the more cramped you will be making your response. If you have a suit you can bid at the one-level, that will always be your best bid when you have a weak hand. When you can't bid your suit

at the one-level you sometimes have to look at the notrump alternative. When partner doubles 1♦, a 1NT response shows around 7 to 11 points.

♠ 8 7 4 ♥ Q 7 4 ♦ Q J 5 ♣ J 8 7 3

Disgusting, isn't it? You do have a diamond stopper but you have a poor hand. Lest you feel this is terrible, consider how you would feel if you did not have the two diamond honors. You can choose from 1NT and 2♣. Even 1♥ might be the best bid in the postmortem. My choice? I guess 1NT with apprehension. You have only 6 points but your choices are very limited.

♠ Q 7 ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ K Q 10 4 ♣ Q 9 8 6

Bid 1NT. This time, you are happy to do so.

♠ A 8 4 ♥ Q 4 ♦ Q 7 6 4 ♣ Q J 8 6

Probably a maximum 1NT bid. Add the ♦10 and you can think about bidding 2NT, which shows a nice 11 points up to a boring 13.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	?

♠ 7 6 4 ♥ Q J 7 4 ♦ 7 6 4 ♣ Q 9 3

It gets worse. Since you don't have a real suit to bid, you are stuck with bidding 1NT. Note that this is about as weak as you can be for a 1NT response. In theory you need 6 to 11 points for 1NT. This hand is weaker than that but logic says other bids are no good. Some players might bid 1♣, and it could work. Trouble is that the next bid from partner might be 3♣ or similar. This is just not a nice hand to have.

♠ 7 6 4 ♥ Q 9 7 4 ♦ J 4 3 ♣ J 4 3

A bad hand for the digestion. One thing you should know is that as your hand gets weaker, you should try harder to avoid bidding notrump. There is the danger that you will get doubled. But that is not the only danger. Your partner may expect you to have a better hand and raise you to 2NT or 3NT. Being in 3NT, even if undoubled, won't be a good conversation piece if you go down three. What is the right bid? There is logic for bidding 1♣ and logic for bidding 2♣. If you bid 1♣, keeping the bidding low, your partner will be pleased to hear you have spades and may raise. If you bid 2♣ your partner may not raise,

but being at the two-level may be bad for you. Take your choice. As I always do when I am writing up controversial decisions like this one, I call one of my friends for an opinion. Tonight, Kit Woolsey was the one who was home. His choice was 1♠. The important point of this hand is that you don't bid notrump if you don't absolutely have to on bad hands. The lesser point is that you may have to bid a three-card suit.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	pass	?
♠ K J 8 2 ♥ 8 5 2 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ 10 7 6			

Bid 1NT. A 1NT bid shows 5 to 11 points but this is the exceptional hand that I alluded to earlier. You don't have a four-card suit to bid, and since they bid 1♠ you can't even fall back on bidding a three-card suit at the one-level. Your choices are all bad. 1NT is probably less poor than the others, so it gets the vote by default. Heaven help you if you ever pick up this hand without the ♠J or even ♠K!

THE PENALTY PASS

When your partner doubles a suit, a pass by you should be meaningful. If you are to set them in their one-level contract, you have to take seven tricks. If you doubt that seven tricks are available, try to bid.

The thing that you need to start with is a good trump suit, usually five or longer. Spot cards are important. If you have Q8532, they are going to turn up with AKJ96 or similar sitting over you. If you have QJ1084 or KJ1094, you have good enough trumps that you can consider passing. In essence, you are the declarer, trying to take seven tricks.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	?
♠ 7 5 ♥ Q J 10 9 7 ♦ A J 3 ♣ J 10 7			

This would be an acceptable pass. You have long hearts with good spots. It is not impossible that your partner has a heart honor. Note that when you pass 1♥ doubled you are saying, in effect, that you want to declare in hearts yourself. Remember, you have to take seven tricks if you are going to set them. If you were declarer in hearts, one of the first things you would try to do is draw trumps so the defenders couldn't ruff your winners. When you are defending against 1♥, you need to do the same thing.

This means your partner will lead hearts. If you can draw all or most of the trumps, you will stop declarer from getting ruffs with his little trumps. Repeating for emphasis, when you pass you need good enough trumps that you can draw theirs. If you have ♠Q107653, you could envision that declarer has ♥AKJ94 over you. It will be hard to keep him from getting all five of his trumps plus whatever other high-card tricks he is entitled to.

The following is what you want to avoid. I have borrowed the hand from S. J. Simon's wonderful book, *Cut For Partners*. This book and *Why You Lose at Bridge* are two very hard-to-find books that deserve to be in everyone's library. The following is a verbatim quote from S. J. Simon's book.

Note that in this book, the players were using four-card majors.

Both vul.

		Mrs. Guggenheim							
		♠	K 5 4 3	♦	J 9 4 3 2	♣	Q 6	Mr. Smug	
		♥	8 7			♦	7	♠	Q 9 7
		♦	W			♣	S	♥	K 10 6 5 3 2
Futile Willie		♣	E			♦	N	♦	7
		♠	A J 10 8			♣	A J 9 7	♣	10 4 2
		♥	4			♦		♦	
		♦	K Q 10 6			♣		♣	
		♣				♦		♦	
		Unlucky Expert							
		♠	6 2			♦	A Q J 9	♣	6 2
		♥				♦	A 8 5	♦	
		♦				♣	K 8 5 3	♣	
		♣				♦		♦	

West	North	East	South
dbl ¹	pass	pass ²	pass
			1♥

1. Impeccable.
2. Revolting.

Futile Willie, as might be expected from an educated scientist, duly led a trump. Mr. Smug scowled at it and played low. The Unlucky Expert won with the nine and led a club...

(After the Unlucky Expert makes an overtrick for plus 360 points, Mr. Smug, sitting East, comes on line in the postmortem.)

"I had six hearts to the king, partner! I thought they'd go down a million. You must have had a rotten double. Oh! I see. Well, it was just unlucky."

S. J. Simon goes on to show how it wasn't unlucky at all. It was predictable. What happened was exactly what I warned you about in the preceding paragraph.

If you accept that passing 1♥ doubled with Mr. Smug's hand is a bad idea, you still have to decide on a bid. Try bidding 1♠. Earlier I discussed bidding a three-card suit as a possible solution. It works here. As you can see, 1♠ is a good contract. Even if partner raises to 2♠, it isn't impossible to make. In any event, if you go down in 2♠ it is better than giving up an overtrick in 1♥ doubled. For the record, you should note that you will take more tricks in spades than in notrump.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	?

♠ 7 5 ♥ K J 10 8 7 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ 9 4 3

Who knows? You have excellent hearts, but you don't have anything on the side to go with them. I honestly don't know what to do. If you pass, they rate to make 1♥ doubled. If you bid, you rate to go down. Anyway, who knows what to bid? I don't. I promise you that you will have ninety-nine normal decisions before you run into this one.

JUMPS TO 2NT OR 3NT

This is a more pleasant decision. If you have stoppers and more than enough points to bid 1NT, you jump to 2NT or 3NT. Your judgment will depend partly on how pushy your partner is to make takeout doubles, but in general, you should be able to bid 2NT with a good 11 points up to an average 13 points. Partner can pass if he wishes. You can jump to 3NT with more points, or a long running suit.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	?

♠ 8 3 ♥ Q J 8 3 ♦ K Q 2 ♣ A 10 8 7

This is a typical jump response of 2NT. North can bid or pass. You promise stoppers in opener's suit, but not in other suits. North's takeout double tells you that the other suits are under control.

♠ 8 3 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ A J 9 8 ♣ A Q 8 3

With this nice a hand, you jump to game to make sure you don't miss out. Because 2NT isn't forcing, you have to go all the way yourself.

♠ 10 ♥ K J 9 ♦ A Q 9 8 5 2 ♣ 10 7 5

It is acceptable to jump to 3NT with this. You expect (hope) to run the diamond suit, which gives you a six trick start on game. Good suits make up for a lot of high-card points. There are two comforts that come with this.

1. North will not have enough points to go slamming. West opened the bidding, so slams are virtually impossible.
2. North doesn't have five or six spades. You don't have to worry that he will run to 4♠.

THE JUMP IN A NEW SUIT TO THE TWO-LEVEL

Some of the time when your partner doubles you will have a suit you want to bid and enough points to show a good hand.

In earlier examples, you saw that a simple bid in a suit shows from 0 points up to some fair 8-point hands. Sooner or later, you will have a hand which is worth so much that a simple bid won't do it justice. This section starts to look at stronger responses.

What does it mean when you jump in a suit in response to a takeout double?

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♥

- Is 2♥ forcing?
- Does 2♥ promise a five-card suit?
- What is the approximate range of points for 2♥?

If you know the answers to these questions, you are ahead of many players who play this and similar sequences by the seat of their pants. In order:

Is 2♥ forcing?

No. A jump in a new suit shows an invitational hand only. Partner can pass, raise, jump to game, or make a variety of other calls.

Does 2♥ promise a five-card suit?

Not at all. If you have a hand in the correct point range, you may jump in a four-card suit.

What is the approximate range of points for a jump to the two-level?

A general range of points is a good 8 to 11. As you will see from the examples, there is more to a jump response than points. This is an area where evaluating

points is important. You have to upgrade some high cards and downgrade others, and make allowances for extra long suits and distribution.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	?

♠ Q 8 7 ♥ Q 9 7 6 4 ♦ K Q 3 ♣ 3 2

Bid 2♥. Your points aren't particularly good ones, but your high cards are in the suits your partner is showing.

SUPER HINT

If your partner doubles a suit for takeout, an honor in a suit that he promises goes up in value and honors in the opponent's suit go down in value. Even an ace is more useful when it is in one of the suits partner is showing.

♠ A J 5 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ A 10 9 3 ♣ 6 5 3

Bid 2♠. You have only four spades, but the hand is far too good to bid just 1♠. When you are lucky enough to have a hand this good, you must show your values if you can. Bidding 1♠ would cause your side to miss some games. Note that when you jump in a four-card suit, you are trusting your partner to have three-card or better support. If your partner makes takeout doubles without proper shape you can't make bids like this one.

♠ K Q 7 4 ♥ 7 4 3 ♦ J 3 2 ♣ Q J 3

Bid 1♠. Don't get caught up in a point-count trap. Yes, you have 9 points with a good four-card suit. But you have some minus factors too. With your 4-3-3-3 shape and with 3 of your points in clubs, it is enough to bid 1♠. I rate this hand at about 7 points once you take the minuses into account.

♠ A K ♥ J 7 6 3 ♦ K 7 6 2 ♣ 10 9 4

Bid 2♥. The terrible quality of your heart suit is compensated for by the extra high-card points. If you forget to jump you will miss a lot of games. Here is a possible layout:

♠	Q 7 6 4
♥	A 10 9 4
♦	A J 10 5
♣	2

♠	A K
♥	J 7 6 3
♦	K 7 6 2
♣	10 9 4

If you respond 1♥, your partner will pass and you will make ten or eleven tricks. What usually ensues is a discussion like this:

South: "Why didn't you raise hearts? You had four of them."

North: "I only had 11 points. I did double 1♣. Why didn't you bid more?"

South: "My hearts were crummy. I was afraid you didn't have heart support. I would have raised with your hand. You should have raised. Then I would have gone to game."

I hear variations of this conversation all the time. The winner of this discussion is usually the one with the louder voice and the stronger determination not to be wrong. But the fact is that this discussion shouldn't take place in an aware partnership. South has a good enough hand that he should jump to 2♥ and North would continue towards game.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	?

♠ 3 ♥ J 10 7 6 3 ♦ A J 7 6 ♣ 4 3 2

Bid 2♥. When you have good suits and shape, your hand goes up in value. You don't want to make a cowardly 1♥ bid.

♠ K 5 4 ♥ 5 4 ♦ A Q 8 5 3 ♣ 8 4 2

Don't overlook the jump response in a minor suit. Bid 2♦. You have invitational strength and a way to show it. Bidding 1♦ is lazy. It is possible that 2♦ will get partner interested in 3NT. It may get your side to 5♦. If the opponents keep bidding, your jump may help your partner compete. Don't make a minimum response when you have a good hand. This is a common and expensive error.

THE SINGLE JUMP IN A NEW SUIT TO THE THREE-LEVEL

The jump to the three-level in a new suit is just like a jump to the two-level in that it is invitational. You need just a little extra since you are going to the three-level. A hand with 9 to 11 points is about right. The main point here is that when you have an appropriate hand, you remember to make a jump.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	pass	?

♠J 7 6 4 ♥ 3 ♦ A Q J 7 3 ♣ Q 9 6

Jump to 3♦. Usually you have a five- or six-card suit for this bid.

♠ 9 8 7 ♥ 10 3 ♦ K 10 8 ♣ K Q J 8 3

Bid 3♣. You have a fair hand with 9 nice points and a good five-card suit. This is way too good to bid 2♣.

♠ 8 6 5 3 ♥ A J 10 8 ♦ K J 3 ♣ 4 3

Bid 3♥. It is possible to jump to the three-level with a four-card suit. You kind of hate to do this because partner is allowed to have only three-card support and being at the three-level may prove difficult. Still, with such a good hand and with no real alternative, bidding 3♥ is my choice.

♠ 7 6 4 3 ♥ 9 6 5 3 ♦ A 3 ♣ A Q J

Shut your eyes and bid 3♥. I could have been nice and not put this hand in the examples but in truth, these hands do come up at the table. If I didn't give you one such hand it would be a disservice. With 11 excellent HCP, you should survive. The problem with a hand like this is that when you bid just 2♥, you end up making four or five a lot of the time. If, conversely, you make the value jump, you may end up in a poor trump suit if partner has something like ♥Q82. Be brave and bid 3♥. You will get to enough good games that the occasional minuses will be more than compensated for.

THE DOUBLE JUMP IN A NEW SUIT TO THE THREE-LEVEL

There is a bid that is easy to imagine but which I do not recall seeing in print. When the bidding goes as shown in the following auction, you can find chapters written about what it means.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	2♥

This was defined earlier as showing 8 to 11 points with a four- or five-card suit. All in all, there isn't much mystery to what a jump to 2♥ shows.

How about these auctions, though?

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	3♦
West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	3♥

When I play with someone and we are filling out our card, this question never seems to come up. Do you know what South's jump should show? Is it forcing? Is it preemptive? Is it invitational? What do you think? Here is a suggestion.

SUGGESTION – Play that a jump to the three-level is a combination of preemptive and invitational. Use the jump to show a five- or six-card suit and a hand that has potential based on distribution, not high cards. It is a hand that may have 6 or 7 HCP but which adds up to 11 or 12 support points. In other words, a long suit and excellent shape.

♠ K 6 5 ♥ 3 ♦ K 10 8 7 6 5 4 ♣ 7 4

You would bid 3♦ if partner doubles 1♣ and RHO passes.

♠ Q 6 5 ♥ K J 7 6 4 3 ♦ 4 3 ♣ 10 9

♠ 3 ♥ K J 8 7 4 ♦ 4 2 ♣ J 10 7 5 3

♠ K 4 ♥ J 8 7 5 4 3 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ Q 5

In the same way, you would jump to 3♥ on all three of these hands if your partner doubles 1♦ and RHO passes.

You have good shape. You have some values. You have a nice suit. You know that bidding 1♥ doesn't do the job, but bidding 2♥ does not feel exactly right. If you do not have a meaning for a jump to 3♥, then bid 2♥, but if your partnership knows that a 3♥ bid shows a weakish hand with good trumps and good shape, kind of a cross between preemptive and invitational, you can bid 3♥ with these hands and not confuse your partner. I predict that if you have a meaning for this jump, it will start coming up at the table.

How did I count this hand as having 11 or 12 support points? Here is my admittedly informal method of counting points when responding to a takeout double. Here is how to think about the first of the three hands above.

- Count the high-card points.
This hand has 6 HCP.
- Add half a point for honors in the suits partner is showing.
This hand adds 1½ points.
- Deduct the same for honors in their suit.
This hand has no such deductions.
- Count the distribution.
This hand has two doubletons, hence 2 distributional points.
- Add a point for a five-card suit and an additional point for each card over five in your suit.
This adds 2 points to what we have already.

Add everything up and we get: 6 + 1½ + 2 + 2 equals 11½ support points. This is enough to bid 3♥.

The big point is that 3♥ shows a hand that is strong in shape with a nice suit, but not strong in high-card points.

THE CUEBID

So far, all of the bids that responder has made have been natural. What do you do when you have a good hand and no natural bid seems to feel right? This is the kind of auction you *will* face at the table.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	2♣

Is a cuebid after a takeout double forcing to game?

A cuebid is not forcing to game. It shows invitational points or more.

A cuebid says you have one of two types of hands:

1. You have a hand that is clearly worth a game force and you cuebid to see which game is best. It is possible that you will reach a slam, although that is unlikely.
2. You have an invitational hand with two suits you wish to investigate. When you have such a hand you can't afford to bid one of the suits because you may guess wrong. Almost always, your two suits will be the majors after your partner doubles a minor.

Here is another way of interpreting this rule for cuebids:

If you cuebid and then bid a new suit or notrump, it is forcing to game.
If you cuebid and then raise partner's suit, it is invitational.

Here are example hands that show the cuebidding routine.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2♥	pass	3♥
pass	pass	pass	

♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ J 10 7 4 ♦ K 4 ♣ 9 6 3

Cuebid 2♣. You have a good hand, but you aren't sure which suit should be trump. Notice that on this hand, you are not sure of a game. There are two problems. One problem is which major suit to play in and the second problem is how high to go. When you cuebid, your partner bids 2♥. This shows four hearts. He may have four spades too. His 2♥ bid does not show a minimum hand. Your cuebid promises that you will bid again so he does not have to jump just because he has a few extra points. You raise to 3♥, showing around 11 support points, and on this hand your partner passes. He has some kind of minimum double. Now your job is to root for partner to take nine tricks.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2♥	pass	4♥
pass	pass	pass	

♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ K J 10 7 ♦ K 4 ♣ 9 6 3

This hand is almost the same as the last hand. I have added the ♥K. Now you have enough points to bid game. If you bid 3♥ with this, your partner can pass and you may miss a good game.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	3♦	pass	3♥
pass	4♥	pass	pass
pass			

♠ A K 4 3 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ Q 7 3 ♣ 8 7 3

On this hand South has enough points for game. South starts with a cuebid and North shows he has four hearts. South bids 2♠ to show he has four of those. By cuebidding and then bidding a new suit, South has told North that the hand is committed to game.

North would raise spades if he had four so his 3♦ bid suggests he has hearts and diamonds. North should have three spades since he made a takeout double. South can bid 3♥ now. He denied four hearts by not raising the round before so what is happening here is that North-South are investigating for the best game. North goes on to 4♥, saying he is willing to play in 4♥. This may be a 4-3 fit but that is okay since North knew what was going on when he bid 4♥.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	3♠	pass	4♠
pass	pass	pass	

♠ K J 4 3 ♥ 3 ♦ A J 7 4 ♣ A 10 9 4

You cuebid and your partner bids hearts. You bid your spades, forcing since 2♠ is a new suit. Your partner raises to 3♠, showing four-card support, and you bid game.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	2NT	pass	3♠
pass	4♠	pass	pass
pass			

♠ Q J 8 5 3 ♥ A 8 ♦ K Q 8 4 ♣ 6 4

North doubles and South cuebids 2♣. His 2♣ bid says he has game-forcing values with four or more spades. North bids 2NT, which denies four spades and shows something in clubs. South rebids his spades to show he has five of them and now North raises. He should have three spades and prefers to play in spades rather than notrump.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2NT	pass	3NT
pass	pass	pass	

♠J 8 7 4 ♥ A K 8 3 ♦ K Q 3 ♣ 9 7

You asked for a major and partner did not show one. Raise to 3NT and give up on looking for a major-suit contract.

NOTE

When you cuebid and partner bids 2NT, it is forcing to game.

Partner says he does not have a major but he does have a stopper in clubs. It may seem curious to play 2NT as game-forcing, but the idea is this. If partner doesn't have a major suit when he doubles, he has bad distribution. He probably has a little extra, in which case you should bid game whether you have an invitational hand or a game-forcing hand.

An aside here that applies to many areas of bridge: When there is bidding from your opponents, it may help them defend but it may also help you play the dummy. When you declare a hand you will often know from the bidding who has the missing points, allowing you to play better than normally.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2♥	pass	2♠
pass	2NT	pass	3NT
pass	pass	pass	

♠ A K 4 3 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ Q 7 3 ♣ 8 7 3

With a full opening bid, you start with a cuebid. It is wrong to arbitrarily bid 4♣. Spades might be the right trump suit, but 3NT from partner's side could be better. Bid 2♣ and see if you can sort out the best contract.

Partner bids 2♥, which does not interest you. Your 2♠ bid tells partner that you don't have hearts. Since you apparently have just spades, you are showing a game-forcing cuebid.

REMEMBER – If you had just spades and a 10- or 11-point hand, you would have responded 2♣ and got the whole thing off your chest at once.

When North bid 2NT, he showed only three spades. If he had four of them he would have raised you. His notrump bid also shows a stopper in clubs. Now that you know partner has a club stopper, you can go to 3NT. This wasn't quite what you expected, but it should be a good spot.

Here is a hand showing a game force of a different type. This time responder has a big hand with a minor suit.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	2♦
pass	2♥	pass	3♣
pass	3♠	pass	4♣
pass	5♣	pass	pass
pass			

♠ K 7 6 4
 ♥ A Q 10 6
 ♦ 6 4
 ♣ K 10 2



♠ A J
 ♥ 7 4
 ♦ 10 8 7
 ♣ A Q J 9 8 3

Here, South has a big hand with a club suit and no particular interest in a major. The way South shows this hand is to cuebid 2♦. If South can get a notrump bid out of North, he will go to 3NT. If not, the bidding may become awkward. Let's see what we can make out of this sequence.

North	South	
dbl		A correct minimum takeout double.
	2♦	South has too much to bid 3♣ and he can't bid notrump without a stopper. South's cuebid gets the ball rolling.
2♥		North bids 2♥, showing a four-card suit. Even if North had a diamond stopper, he would show a major first. Notrump can come later.
	3♣	3♣ is forcing since it is a new suit. Even if South had 20 points, he could bid 3♣ and know the bidding will continue. It is crucial that you have agreements like this one. If either partner starts to distrust the other, the bidding will degenerate into a mud-wrestling contest.
3♠		North should bid notrump if he can. Since he can't, he shows his spades. North is probably regretting his minimum double at this point.
	4♣	It doesn't look like 3NT is going to fetch and South has no major-suit support to show. 4♣ is what is left.
5♣		North would like to pass 4♣, but honors the force and goes to game.

Expert trick

Some partnerships have the following rule. If someone makes a game-forcing bid and it turns out that there is no major-suit fit and no stopper for 3NT, you can stop in four of a minor. This is a decent rule, but it is nervous to implement it since it is both rare and delicate. If this rule exists, North could pass 4♣ on the above auction.

Two more examples on this topic, including a hand that is almost worth a cuebid:

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	?

♠ K Q 10 2 ♥ Q J 7 2 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ 6 3

Cuebid 2♣. With two four-card majors, you can't tell which one is best. Jumping to 2♥ or 2♠ shows this strength, but risks playing in the wrong suit. You are

lucky that you have enough to make a cuebid. If partner bids a major, you will raise to three. If he bids 2NT, you will raise to 3NT.

If you have a little less, like the hand below, you have a nearly impossible problem.

♠ K Q 10 2 ♥ Q J 7 2 ♦ 7 3 2 ♣ 6 3

This hand is not quite up to cuebidding standards. Your choices are all flawed.

1. Bid 2♠, hoping you are in the right suit.
2. Bid 2♥, hoping you are in the right suit.
3. Bid 1♣ and hope you get a second chance and can bid hearts later.

I vote for 1♣, expecting that it will not end the bidding.

What if the doubler has both major suits when partner cuebids asking for a major?

If North has both majors, he bids hearts first. Even with good spades and crummy hearts, he should bid hearts first. The idea is to find a 4-4 fit. If North doesn't bid hearts, South will assume North doesn't have them and they will get lost.

When might South jump in a new suit after making a cuebid?

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	?

♠ Q J 9 7 5 4 2 ♥ A ♦ K Q 8 ♣ K 10

Bid 2♦. It is not often that you can hope for a slam after the opponents open the bidding, but this hand seems to fit the bill. Start with a cuebid, confirm what the trump suit will be, and follow with keycard Blackwood. For example:

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	2♦
pass	2♥	pass	3♠
pass	4♣	pass	4NT
pass	5♣	pass	6♣
pass	pass	pass	

On the second round you jump to 3♠, which says spades are trump, no matter what. The ensuing 4NT bid is keycard for spades. In this book, the partnership is using:

- 5♣ to show zero or three keycards
- 5♦ to show one or four keycards
- 5♥ to show two keycards
- 5♠ to show two keycards with the queen of trumps

A problem hand to think about:

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	?
<p>♠ Q J 9 2 ♥ A J 8 5 4 ♦ 9 7 5 ♣ 8</p>			

Your hand is good enough to bid 2♦, showing invitational values or more. If your partner bids two of a major, you can bid three or four according to your mood. If your partner bids 2NT, denying a major, you bid 3♥. Remember that if partner bids 2NT over your cuebid, your side is committed to game. When you bid 3♥, he has to do something. Perhaps you might like to have the definition that 3♥ here is forcing and 4♥ is a sign-off. Personally, I think that playing 3♥ as forcing should suffice.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESPONDING TO A TAKEOUT DOUBLE WHEN RHO RAISES

In the previous chapter, your partner doubled the opening bid and RHO passed. You saw that even when RHO passed, things were not always easy. When your partner doubles, your RHO often has something to say. Things get even more complex.

This section will talk about all kinds of bids from your RHO.

BIDDING WHEN RHO RAISES OPENER

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	2♦	?

I could write a book about bidding when partner doubles and RHO bids something. The biggest chapter of all would be on bidding when partner doubles and they raise.

Often, when both sides have a fit, the bidding becomes outrageous with the winners needing good judgment to come out on top. When you get into a dogfight, you have to know how hard to push. And, you have to know when to get out. There is a lot at stake on any one hand and since the situation comes up often, the total amount won or lost is significant. Here are a number of high frequency bidding decisions that occur when your partner doubles and RHO raises. I will discuss responsive doubles in this section, but not immediately. The questions following will show bidding situations that do not require the responsive double.

THEY RAISE TO THE TWO-LEVEL

Even a gentle raise to the two-level by your RHO can create issues for you in the bidding. This is especially true if they are bidding a major. Spades in particular are difficult to contend with. Here are some examples.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?

♠ Q J 9 3 ♥ Q 7 ♦ J 10 5 3 ♣ 9 8 2

Did you bid 2♠ with this? If not, why not? If you are worried that partner may have only three spades, you are playing pessimistic bridge. Winning bridge is not the result of pessimism. Winning bridge is the result of being aggressive and fighting for what is yours. Are you worried that your partner will expect more from you? If so, I would like to point out that passing 2♣ will end in a bad result if they make it and you could have made something yourself.

Bad results that come from being passive tend to be ‘invisible’ results that don’t get noticed as quickly as bad results that come from overbidding.

If it turns out that your partner gets you too high after you bid 2♣, I will bet you that it is your partner’s fault. Bid 2♣ on hands like this one and you will see your partner’s judgment improve dramatically.

One last question about this hand. If your partner overcalled 1♣ instead of doubling, wouldn’t you raise to 2♣ with the hand above?

♠ 7 6 4 ♥ 5 4 ♦ K Q J 3 ♣ 8 7 6 3

Bid 2♦. Don’t overlook bids like this. This will help partner with the opening lead and it may serve to push the opponents to the three-level. Don’t fret that this is the time partner decided to double with only two cards in the unbid minor. It may happen, but fear should not deter you from bidding.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	2♦	?

♠ 7 6 ♥ J 9 8 4 2 ♦ 7 5 4 2 ♣ K 2

Bid 2♥. When you have a five-card major to bid, it is gold. The fifth trump is a powerful extra value. This hand is not a minimum 2♥ call. If the ♥J were the ten, I would still bid 2♥.

♠ A Q 6 5 ♥ J 5 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ Q 7 6 3

Bid 2♠. Jumping is tempting, but should be rejected. The important thing is to get into the bidding. If you had a fifth spade, you would jump to 3♠.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♥	?

♠ 6 4 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ 6 4 3 ♣ Q J 8 7 3

Go ahead and bid 3♣. You have enough for a three-level bid and you have a fifth club. The fifth club is not required for bidding at the three-level, but as always, it is a nice motivation. Modest caution is needed when you are bidding a minor suit at the three-level since your partner's double does not promise clubs as strongly as it promises the majors.

♠ 8 6 5 3 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ A 7 ♣ K J 7 3

Bid 2♠. Even with a terrible suit, you should compete in it if necessary. I wouldn't like to bid this suit at the three-level, but at the two-level I don't mind. Note also that you are bidding a major suit. Partner may fudge now and then on having support for an unbid minor, but never on support for a major. One final factor is that you have an extra point or two for your bid.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	2♠	?

♠ 7 6 ♥ J 9 8 4 2 ♦ 7 5 4 2 ♣ K 2

You should be tempted, but you should pass. You saw this hand earlier. This hand was worth a 2♥ bid when the opponents were bidding and raising diamonds but it isn't worth bidding at the three-level here. I confess that some of my overbidding friends might bid 3♥, but no one will fuss at you for passing this one. However, throw in a bit more and you should be in the auction. Improve the hearts to ♥Q10943, and it is a free 3♥ bid. Or add the ♦Q and ♦10. That would make the hand worth bidding too.

This auction shows why it is harder to compete against spades than against any other suit. When they raise spades, they push you to the three-level. You love spades when you have them and hate them when you don't.

THEY RAISE TO THE THREE-LEVEL

The higher they bid, the harder it is for you to compete. Note that a jump raise to the three-level by your RHO is usually a weak bid showing good trumps and from 4 to 7 points. Different pairs use different degrees of sanity with their double raises. I have seen opponents raise to the three-level with just 1 or 2 points.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	3♣	?

♠ Q J 9 3 ♥ Q 7 ♦ J 10 5 3 ♣ 9 8 2

This hand was worth a bid of 2♠ over 2♣. It is not worth a bid of 3♠. Bidding at the three- or four-level shows something real. Just because your RHO is showing a weak hand does not mean your hand has gotten better. If you can make something with this hand, your partner will have a good enough hand to double again. Typically, your range to bid a suit at the three-level over 3♣ is 7 points with a five-card suit up to 10 points with a four- or five-card suit.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	3♦	?

♠ 10 5 4 ♥ Q J 8 5 3 ♦ 9 8 2 ♣ K J

This is an okay 3♥ bid. You have a nice suit which is helped a lot by the fifth trump. Their bidding suggests your partner may have a singleton diamond (don't count on this) and if so, you won't have many diamond losers. Even your ♠10 may be a factor. The number of times a ten spot comes into its own is impressive.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	3♦	?

♠ A Q 4 ♥ Q 9 5 3 2 ♦ J 10 4 ♣ Q 8

It is reasonable to bid 4♥. You have good cards in the majors, you have the ♣Q, and you expect partner not to have a lot of diamond losers since you have three of them. Given that you would bid 3♥ with less, bidding game and sparing partner having to guess what you have is a good idea.

♠ J 8 4 3 ♥ A K 8 3 ♦ 4 ♣ 10 7 5 3

Well? You would like to tell partner you have both majors and let him pick the right one. Traditionally, you would cuebid 4♦ to tell partner to choose the trump suit. Trouble is that you do not have enough points to force the bidding to the four-level. The answer, if you wish to add a convention, is to use the responsive double. This convention is coming up next. It is recommended.

THE RESPONSIVE DOUBLE: A TOOL YOU CAN USE AFTER PARTNER MAKES A TAKEOUT DOUBLE

The responsive double is a modern convention that deserves a look. I talked about this convention in the first chapter. It is a good one to know. Responsive doubles will make many of your competitive bidding decisions easy, which is as good a recommendation as one could want. The material here is part review and part elaboration. You will see that it fits right in with this section on competitive bidding. If you have a partner willing to use this convention, I recommend it to you. It works this way.

WHEN PARTNER DOUBLES A MINOR SUIT AND THEY RAISE TO THE TWO-LEVEL

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?

If your partner doubles a minor suit and RHO raises, a double by you says that you have 4-4 in the major suits and enough points to be bidding. On this auction, you might double with the following hands. On some of them you might do something else.

♠J 7 4 3 ♥K J 9 3 ♦Q 10 ♣J 7 5

Double. Responsive. This hand is good enough to bid at the two-level, but what to bid is uncertain. If you guess to bid 2♥ or 2♠, you might play in a 4-3 fit when there was a 4-4 fit available in the other major. The responsive double is a big help here. South can double 2♣ and North will show his best major. Note that North can do more if he has a good hand. Since he can count on South having four-card support for each major and a minimum of about 7 points, North can invite by jumping to three of a major or can go to game.

♠K 8 7 3 ♥K Q 6 3 ♦K 9 4 ♣7 3

Double. Responsive. This hand has so many points there may be a game. The way to show this hand is to double, showing the two four-card majors, and then raise partner's major to the three-level when North bids one of them. A responsive double promises certain minimum values but it can be made on really good hands too.

♠ K Q J 4 ♥ A Q 6 3 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ 10 4

Double East's 2♣ bid and when partner bids a major, jump to game. Do not invite when you have game points. Note that your partner will always bid a major after your double if he has one. If he bids diamonds, he does not have a major. I do not have a perfect bid for you when your partner denies a major. What was an easy problem just became difficult. I suspect that passing 2♦ is the winning bid. But I do not guarantee it. You might try bidding 3♣, hoping to find 3NT or a 4-3 major-suit fit. Game does not rate to be cold, however, if you do this.

♠ 7 4 ♥ K J 9 5 ♦ A 8 7 3 ♣ 9 8 3

Bid 2♥. This is a reminder hand. Do not make a responsive double without four cards in each major. When you have one major and one minor to show, all you can do is bid the major.

♠ 7 4 ♥ K J 9 5 ♦ A Q 7 3 ♣ 9 8 3

Bid 3♥. You cannot make a responsive double but you do have a nice natural bid you can make. Bidding 3♥ shows 10 or 11 support points, which is what you have. Here you have just four hearts but you do have maximum high-card points.

Expert judgment situation when using responsive doubles

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?

♠ K 2 ♥ 7 6 2 ♦ Q J 2 ♣ Q J 10 8 7

Pass. Remember this hand well. If you are playing responsive doubles, you can't double for penalty. If you double, your partner will bid a major, knowing you have support! You don't have it. What you do with hands like this one is pass. If opener passes too, your partner will consider that you might have a hand like this one. He may double again. If he does, you get your wish to defend 2♣ doubled. If he passes it out in 2♣, it means partner has a minimum hand. You will set 2♣ a few and will get a decent score.

WHEN PARTNER DOUBLES A MAJOR SUIT AND THEY RAISE TO THE TWO-LEVEL

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♥	?

If your partner doubles a major suit and they raise, a double by you says you have both minor suits and enough points to be bidding. Note that you are forcing partner to go to the three-level. You need an extra point or two to make this safe. Here are a couple of example hands using the above auction.

♠ 8 7 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ A J 8 3 ♣ Q J 10 8

With 8 good HCP and two four-card minors, you can look for a minor-suit partscore. But which minor suit do you bid? Here you are at the three-level. You don't want to play in a 4-3 club fit if there is an eight- or nine-card diamond fit. And likewise, you don't want to play in diamonds if clubs is best. The way around this decision is to double, showing a good enough hand to be at the three-level with two four-card minors.

♠ 8 7 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A Q 8 3 ♣ Q 8 6 5 2

You can double with this hand too. As long as you have four-card support for both minors, it is okay to double when you have the strength for the bid.

You may ask if this science is worthwhile. I think so. There are two reasons for this. First, the responsive double lets you get more competitive bidding situations right and second, the double doesn't have any useful meaning now. Can you remember the last time the bidding went one of a suit, double by partner, raise on your right, and you had a hand that wanted to make a penalty double?

♠ J 5 ♥ 4 2 ♦ K J 10 8 4 ♣ A K J 4

Double to show the minors. Say partner bids 3♦. You should feel like bidding again. Your choices include bidding 5♦. But you might also consider bidding 3♥, asking for a heart stopper for notrump. The main deal of this hand is that your double is not limited to 8 or 9 points. If you have both minors, starting with double and then showing your extra values is the way to go.

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE RESPONSIVE DOUBLE

Anytime someone invents a new convention, there is a rush to use it followed by a rush to change it. One question that always comes up regarding responsive doubles is this one.

How high should you play responsive doubles when partner doubles and they raise?

Using a double as responsive when your partner doubles for takeout and your RHO raises is good. This is guaranteed. Here are some auctions and questions. There are lots of auctions here. Look at them carefully before going on.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	(?)	?

If RHO raises to 2♣, responsive doubles are in effect.

What if RHO raises to 3♣? Are responsive doubles still in effect?

What if RHO raises to 4♣? Are responsive doubles still in effect?

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	(?)	?

If RHO raises to 2♥, responsive doubles are in effect.

What if RHO raises to 3♥? Are responsive doubles still in effect?

What if RHO raises to 4♥? Are responsive doubles still in effect?

Let's go further. What about the situation where your partner doubles a preempt and they raise?

West	North	East	South
2♦	dbl	(?)	?

If RHO raises to 3♦, responsive doubles should be in effect.

What if RHO raises to 4♦? Are responsive doubles still in effect?

West	North	East	South
2♥	dbl	(?)	?

If RHO raises to 3♥, responsive doubles should be in effect.

What if RHO raises to 4♥? Are responsive doubles still in effect?

If you are willing to challenge your memory a little (it will be worth it), play that when they bid and raise up to 4♦, a double is responsive. You can make a case for other ranges for the responsive double, but this one is good.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	4♦	?

If South doubles, it is responsive. The rule says that if they preempt to 4♦ or less, a double is responsive.

West	North	East	South
2♥	dbl	3♥	?

If South doubles, it is responsive. The rule says that if they preempt to 4♦ or less, a double is responsive.

West	North	East	South
2♠	dbl	4♠	?

If South doubles, it is penalty. The rule is that if RHO raises his partner's preempt higher than 4♦, the double is not responsive. South won't often have a lot of spade tricks. More likely, South has 10 or more useful points and is refusing to allow RHO to steal from you. This is the kind of hand South might have when he doubles East's 4♠ bid:

♠ 8 7 ♥ Q 10 4 ♦ A 9 6 3 ♣ K J 3 2

The idea is that they have contracted for ten tricks on a sequence where they rate to be sacrificing. You have 10 HCP, your partner has 13 or more, so they are in 4♣ with just 17 or fewer points. You should double and your partner should lead a trump. Trying to find a five-level contract is too difficult. Doubling and getting a penalty is the most realistic result. If they make it, you just move on to the next hand. The next section shows a few more hands where they preempt and jump to the four-level.

One important observation. Your partner knows you cannot have a strong holding in trumps. He knows you are doubling with points. If your partner has excellent shape he is entitled to keep bidding.

What can you do when partner doubles and they jump to the four-level?

This section shows some example hands where partner doubles a suit and RHO raises to the four-level. Things are obviously more difficult than when they raise to the two- or three-level. Also important is what they are jumping to. Is their bid four of a minor or four of a major? This section blends judgment and science. I will include samples of both.

I will assume you are using responsive doubles through 4♦. There are also some examples of hands where they jump to four of a major. Opponents will do this sort of thing. Here are some thoughts to help you.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	4♦	?

♠ Q 3 ♥ Q J 10 7 ♦ 7 3 ♣ A J 6 5 2

Try 4♥. If East had raised to 2♦, you would have bid 3♥. With East's actual bid, you have to choose between pass and 4♥. The responsive double won't work. It will just encourage North to bid spades. This is, like many actions at the four-level, a guessing game. That's why East jumped to 4♦. He is not there to make life easy for you.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	4♥	?

♠ 7 6 3 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A Q 9 2 ♣ K J 8 2

Double. This is another example of a double that is not responsive, just card showing. Even if you use responsive doubles, a double of 4♥ tends to show high cards. Your partner will know you aren't doubling on the basis of trump tricks. You seldom have a trump stack when they bid this way. Your double just shows a good hand with some tricks and an interest in showing you have a nice hand. In a way, the double is a lesson to the opponents to tell them not to mess with you. If they go down, you will have earned some respect. If they make it, you can feel unlucky. This is as weak a hand as you can have to double 4♥.

♠ A J 6 3 ♥ 7 6 3 ♦ K Q 3 ♣ J 8 2

What do you do?

Should you double to show a decent hand? Should you bid 4♣? Or should you avoid the issue by passing?

Assume that no one is vulnerable and assume you are playing matchpoints. Getting the right answer to this hand is tricky. There is a tool that may or may not help.

It is called the Law of Total Tricks. You may have heard about the Law. Some players claim it is the best tool in the world to help you judge competitive auctions. Some players feel it is overblown and should be used as a guideline only. I won't go into the technical pros and cons but can tell you that I wrote a book with Anders Wirgren from Sweden (*I Fought The Law of Total Tricks*)

showing many flaws with the Law and ways to improve it. The Law has been around for years and players still debate its merits.

The Law works this way. It states that if you add the number of trumps East-West have if they play the hand to the number of trumps North-South have if they play the hand, that number will tell you how many tricks can be made in total. On this hand, let us assume that your partner has four spades and that the opponents have nine hearts. You add eight (the number of spades your side has) to nine (the number of hearts they have), which gives you seventeen. In theory, if you add the number of tricks you can make in spades to the number of tricks they can make in hearts, it should also add up to seventeen.

Putting this into practice, you can visualize the result if you bid 4♠. If you can make ten tricks in your 4♠ contract, East-West will have seven tricks in their 4♥ contract.

If you can take ten tricks and make four spades, the Law says you will set them three tricks. You would do better to double them for down three and +500 to you.

If you find out that you can make only nine tricks in spades, you can hold the opponents to eight tricks in hearts. Again, doubling them is best.

If you can take only eight tricks in spades, the opponents' limit is nine tricks. Your double won't gain much since they will only be down one trick.

The big emphasis here is that in all three of these cases, you do better by doubling than by bidding 4♠.

Since your partner may have just three spades, the odds for doubling are even better. (The Law can not provide any assurances since your side may have seven or eight spades and their side may have nine or ten hearts.)

Returning to the question of what you should do with the 11-point hand above, you should do something. The Law tells you to double 4♥, and the number of high cards and your good spades tell you to bid. Whatever you do, do something. Do not pass and twit that you only had four spades, or later, after they go down a couple, claim that you 'almost' doubled them. Do something.

The rule of thumb is that if you have 10 useful HCP and *no good bid to make*, you can whack them when they jump to 4♥ or 4♠. Your side has a big majority of the high-card points. You must make your presence felt in this circumstance.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	4♠	?
<p>♠ 7 6 ♥ K 2 ♦ 7 3 ♣ A J 10 7 6 3 2</p>			

Bid 5♣. An easy decision. All the good high cards and the excellent club suit suggest bidding. The Law of Total Tricks backs you up. Your side has ten or eleven clubs. They have nine or ten spades. Let's guess that we have ten clubs

and they have ten spades. This adds up to twenty, which suggests there are twenty tricks to be had. If you can make eleven tricks in clubs, they have nine in spades. Bidding 5♣ will be good. If you have only ten tricks in clubs, they have ten in spades. Once again, bidding 5♣ will be good. Note that having a doubleton spade is a poor sign. You would rather have three. When you have three, you know your partner has a stiff or a void. When you have two, there is the danger that he has two, which means the defenders will get off to a good start. Keep the problems you are having on this hand in mind when you are East in this kind of bidding. If you can raise partner to the four-level, your opponents may experience the same irritation.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	4♣	?
<p>♠ A K 4 3 ♥ J 7 5 3 ♦ Q 8 2 ♣ 7 2</p>			

Double. When they bid to four of a minor, you can use responsive doubles. In fact, you won't always have both majors as you do here. You should, however, have at least three cards in each major, because your partner will take your double out to a major much of the time. If your partner has a relatively balanced hand, he may choose to sit for the double and hope to get a penalty. For this reason, you need to have 10 or so HCP to double 4♣.

RHO RAISES OVER YOUR PARTNER'S TAKEOUT DOUBLE — SOME DIFFICULT HANDS

Sometimes your methods will seem inadequate. No matter what bidding system you use, there will be hands that do not fit. This can happen when your partner doubles and they raise and you have a hand that doesn't seem to fit a free bid or a responsive double.

NOTE

Even if you use responsive doubles you will find that they are not always the perfect answer.

WHEN THEY RAISE TO THE TWO-LEVEL

When they raise to the two-level, you at least have some room to bid. The hands in this section are frustrating. Some of them have solutions, some don't.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?

Two ideas:

1. I suggest you use the cuebid to show:
 - a. Hands that are interested in getting to 3NT
 - b. Hands with a suit and modest slam interest
2. I suggest that with some difficult hands that want to show game values with a suit you can start with a responsive double.

Here are examples of some awkward hands you might have.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?
♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ K Q 8 3 ♦ Q 7 ♣ 4 3 2			

The responsive double handles this hand well so you don't have to cuebid on this type of hand, which was the popular choice for this hand before responsive doubles. If you don't use responsive doubles, then cuebidding is the solution to ensure you get to the right major.

♠ A K J 7 ♥ J 5 3 ♦ A J 10 8 ♣ 10 6

As you saw earlier, you might use a responsive double. If partner bids spades you raise to game. If he bids hearts, you will bid 2♦. A responsive double followed by a new suit is forcing to game. An alternative to doubling is bidding 4♠. This is sane but it may keep you out of a better 3NT contract. Do not bid 3♠. This hand is too strong. Note that if your partner does something you do not expect, you may have to bid 4♦ next.

♠ 8 4 ♥ A J 10 9 8 6 ♦ A Q 7 3 ♣ 8

I suggest bidding 3♣. Your partner will think you are looking for 3NT and if he bids that, you will bid 4♥ saying you have a hand like this one. One thing your partner won't do is jump to 4♦ over your cuebid. Remember, he thinks you are looking for notrump, not looking for the best fit. If he bids 3♦ or 3♣ over your cuebid, you will also bid 4♥. This auction suggests a very good hand and your partner may be able to look for a slam. Just remember that bidding after their preempt is never easy.

♠ 8 6 3 ♥ K Q J 7 ♦ A K J 4 ♣ 7 3

If you make a responsive double, your partner might bid 4♦. That would be awkward. If you make a cuebid and partner bids 3NT, you won't know if 4♥ might not be a better spot.

I suggest bidding 4♥ on the theory that slam, if it exists, will require an excellent fit plus good shape. It is not likely that you will have many slams after the bidding begins this way so you should not get involved in obscure bidding if a slam rates to be a long shot. If you had one more heart and one less club, bidding 3♣ and then going to 4♥ would make some sense.

Note that if you are using responsive doubles, a cuebid here denies both majors. This can be a useful inference for your partner.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♥	?

♠ J 4 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A K 10 8 7 4 ♣ K J 4

Bid 3♥. It is very likely that you have a good hand like this one for your cuebid. If you had a good hand with spades you would probably bid them. When the opponents are bidding a major, a cuebid by you should approximate this hand. The net effect is that you are looking for 3NT and not a major suit contract. You must be clear that looking for notrump can apply regardless of the suit they are bidding.

Expert Trick – A special agreement to help you find a notrump contract

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♥	3♥
dbl	redbl	pass	?

♠ J 4 ♥ J 9 4 ♦ A K 10 8 7 4 ♣ K J

This is a bidding trick that is virtually unknown. Your side is looking for 3NT. That is your goal at this moment. Your partner's redouble says he has half a stopper in their suit. He has something like ♥Q7 or a singleton king. You have ♥J94 so given you know your partner has something in hearts, you can bid 3NT from your side. Your partner cannot have the ace or the protected king else he would have bid 3NT himself.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?

♠ 7 4 ♥ A 8 ♦ A Q 8 7 5 4 2 ♣ 7 3

Bid 3♣. If not using responsive doubles, I truly do not know how to bid to 3NT for sure. Starting with a cuebid won't work because partner will bid a major before bidding notrump. You can jump to 3♦, but that too is feeble since you have such a good hand. Partner can have a lot of minimum hands that will pass 3♦ and which will make 3NT. Tough hand.

If you are using responsive doubles, you have a chance to get the 3NT since partner will think about bidding notrump in response to your cuebid.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?

♠ K Q 8 7 ♥ A 9 ♦ K Q 7 6 3 ♣ 9 3

A possible answer is for you to double, implying you have both majors. This is a temporary lie. Your intent is to double and then bid a suit. When you do this you promise game points. You may have one suit, you may have two suits. What you do promise is game points. If you have two suits, they will always be a major and a minor since otherwise you would have found a fit by now.

Don't overuse this bidding trick. Here is a slightly weaker hand with the same shape as above.

♠ K Q 8 7 ♥ A 9 ♦ J 10 8 7 4 ♣ 9 3

There is no need to use the responsive double with this hand. You have a major and you have invitational values. Best is a simple 3♣ bid over 2♣, a choice that will not lead to confusion.

WHEN THEY RAISE TO THE THREE-LEVEL

When they raise to the three-level, you have less room to bid and that may force you to make a final decision when you would prefer to go slower. Annoyingly, you cannot make a cuebid to see if 3NT is a good contract because you are too high. Cuebids are essentially not available to you after they bid three of their suit.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	3♣	?

♠ Q 3 ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ K Q 7 4 ♣ 9 3 2

Bid 4♥. This is a compromise bid. 3♥ is possible, but it is conservative.

♠ A Q J 5 ♥ Q J 8 4 ♦ A 9 8 ♣ 9 2

You can make a responsive double. If you were thinking of making a cuebid instead, that could work, but a responsive double tells partner you have both majors and makes his life a little easier. You have a huge hand but probably should be content to reach game in the right major rather than look for an unlikely slam.

♠ A K J 4 3 2 ♥ K 4 3 ♦ K 10 8 ♣ 9

Bid 4♠. You might miss a slam if partner has the right 10-count. But you might get too high if you bid 4NT. Even if you ask for aces, you can't find a way to tell partner that spades are trump. I suggest you take a conservative approach since there is no obvious way to proceed towards slam.

WHEN THEY RAISE TO THE FOUR-LEVEL

When they bid at the four-level you have less room for science. The following hands are difficult no matter what your methods are. Judgment will be needed.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	4♦	?

♠ Q 5 ♥ K J 4 3 ♦ 3 2 ♣ K 9 7 5 4

♠ A 8 ♥ Q J 8 7 5 4 ♦ 9 ♣ K 8 5 2

♠ 9 5 3 ♥ A K Q J 7 ♦ 8 2 ♣ K J 6

All three of these hands would bid 4♥ because there is no bid available that you can trust to get you the information you need.

BIDDING WHEN YOUR OPPONENTS USE THE JORDAN 2NT RAISE

There is an excellent convention that I recommend to you. It has many names. One is enough. I will use the first name I heard to describe it; the Jordan raise. It works nicely. Your partner opens 1♥ or 1♠ and RHO doubles. When you have a good hand with a fit for partner, you should show the fit if possible. Redoubling first when you have four-card support causes problems. Believe me.

Some of these problem hands can be handled by the Jordan convention. After RHO's double, a 2NT bid tells opener that you have at least four-card support and a limit raise or game values. You could have more.

Jordan tells your partner how many trumps you have

When you use this convention, you gain this very important distinction. When you redouble and then support partner, you promise exactly three trumps. With four or more trumps, you use Jordan. Here are some typical hands that would use the Jordan 2NT bid after partner bids a major and RHO doubles.

West	North	East	South
	1♠	dbl	?

♠ K Q 8 3 ♥ 10 7 5 3 ♦ 7 4 ♣ A 7 3

This hand would bid 2NT. It is willing to stop in 3♠ if opener is minimum.

♠ J 5 4 2 ♥ A Q ♦ K Q 9 8 ♣ J 5 3

This hand would bid 2NT also. But it will insist on game if North shows a minimum.

♠ A J 8 7 3 ♥ 3 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ K 10 5 3

This hand would bid 4♥ if you are using splinter raises. This bid shows a stiff heart, game points, and four or more cards in support of partner. If you do not use splinter bids, bid 2NT with this hand. Whatever you do with this hand, do not jump to 4♠. That would show a weak hand with lots of spades and lots of distribution.

♠ A 10 6 ♥ A 10 9 5 3 ♦ Q 8 ♣ 7 6 3

Redouble. Raise spades later. A 2NT response over East's double shows four or more trumps. Guaranteed.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN PARTNER DOUBLES A MAJOR AND RHO USES THE JORDAN 2NT BID?

The reason I am discussing this convention is to show you some nice tools to use when *they* use it. When your partner doubles a major for takeout, you will frequently hear a 2NT bid from the next player. They usually alert this bid as showing a raise. If they do not alert it you are probably safe in assuming it is a Jordan raise, but you should not ask questions. Most likely, RHO has a Jordan raise and his partner forgot. No need to ask questions and remind them of their system. This brings up an interesting aside.

Important bidding guideline that has nothing to do with takeout doubles

Do you really need to know?

If an opponent makes a bid that you suspect is a conventional bid, do not ask what it means unless you really do need to know. All that happens is that you help the opponents with their agreements. You can always ask what something means when the bidding is over. A typical example is when an opponent bids 4NT, asking for aces. You can't imagine how many people ask what form of Blackwood they are using. I cannot imagine anyone needing to ask that question now.

When you are faced with a Jordan raise, you should be alert to making a good bid. There are some things you can do, one of them being to double. Here are some examples of bidding versus their Jordan raise.

E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	2NT*	?

♠J7 ♥K987 ♦9862 ♣953

Pass. This is a typical hand for South to hold after East's 2NT response. East's bid shows 11 support points or more and usually includes 9 or more HCP. In a way, East is saying he has redouble strength along with his four-card trump support.

With everyone else having something to say, you won't have much to talk about. You will usually have less than 5 points. Which isn't enough to bid with. This hand is about par, which isn't saying very much. With this hand, you should pass.

You may, however, have some shape. Look at the South hand in the following diagram. It has nothing except five hearts to the queen-jack. Not wonderful. Still, North has some heart support and might be interested in bidding 5♥ over their 4♠ as a sacrifice. Or perhaps if North is on lead, he might like to know that a heart lead is reasonable. In this light, you can bid 3♥. North has to be awake enough to remember the specific auction. He has to know that you are broke and are bidding with a decent suit and not a decent bunch of high cards. Here is a possible layout. For the sake of good judgment, let's assume that East-West are vulnerable and you are not.

		♠ 10	
		♥ K 10 6 4	
		♦ A 9 8 7	
		♣ A J 10 7	
♠ A Q J 5 3 2			♠ K 9 6 4
♥ 5 2			♥ A 9
♦ K 10 5			♦ Q J 3 2
♣ K 9			♣ Q 8 3
		♠ 8 7	
		♥ Q J 8 7 3	
		♦ 6 4	
		♣ 6 5 4 2	

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	2NT*	?

Here is the auction again. West bids 1♠ and East bids the Jordan 2NT raise. Look what you can do with this pathetic hand.

If South bids 3♥, North can bid 5♥ over 4♠ if he wishes to go for the throat. On the layout of these cards, 4♠ will make four or five depending on the opening lead. 5♥ by South will go down two or three, either of which is a good result. If North isn't happy to bid 5♥, his heart lead will be the best thing for the defense. A heart is the only lead to hold 4♠ to ten tricks.

Now, I don't want to give the impression that 5♥ is a wonderful spot or that a heart lead will always be best. I do want to give the impression that bidding with the right hands will create consternation in the auction and will give your side extra chances that you won't get if you pass the South hand.

In an upcoming section I am going to discuss how to bid when East redoubles. In a way, the situation here is similar in that you won't have much to bid with. Still, there are some hands that are worth bidding with. When you finish the section on bidding over redoubles, come back to this one and see how the two are related.

E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2NT*	?

♠ 7 3 ♥ 9 8 2 ♦ 10 2 ♣ Q 10 9 6 5 3

I like 4♣. It shows nothing except some clubs and a little shape and a willingness to save if the opponents go to game. This may or may not work. I like it, though. If you realize that you will never have a 10-count, then you will realize that you will never bid if you follow traditional rules.

E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2NT*	?

♠ 10 9 7 5 2 ♥ 9 8 ♦ 10 9 8 6 2 ♣ 5

If you wish to be brave, try bidding 4♣. First, of course, note the vulnerability. If, for instance, only their side is vulnerable, you can afford to go down three tricks in 4♣. You can expect to be doubled but with your shape, you can hope to make seven tricks, which will be an excellent result assuming they can make 4♥. Perhaps they were thinking of bidding a slam. West can still ask for aces but he cannot make a cuebid, which might have been one of his wishes.

This is a book on takeout doubles but there is room for a new double here, after their Jordan 2NT response.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	2NT*	?

♠ 7 5 3 ♥ 2 ♦ K Q 9 5 ♣ J 10 9 6 5

If you choose to do so, you can double 2NT to show the minors. In essence, East is bidding spades and in essence, you are making a responsive double of spades. If you like living on the edge you can bid 3♦, which may help your partner with his lead.

THE JUMP IN A NEW SUIT AFTER RHO RAISES

It is easy to define a jump response and I dare say most would get it right. If you have a hand too good for a simple competitive bid but still not worth forcing to game, you should make a jump response. A jump response shows something in the 9 to 11 point range.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	?

♠ Q J 6 3 ♥ A 7 ♦ K 6 5 3 ♣ 10 7 4

You have enough to jump to 3♠. Remember that you would bid 2♠ without the ♥A. Your partner would not expect you to have this big a hand.

♠ Q J 6 3 ♥ A 10 7 3 ♦ K 6 3 ♣ 9 4

Double. This hand is a good example of the responsive double. With this hand, you can double and then raise partner's major suit. Without the responsive double you are sort of stuck. There is no bid that lets you show both majors and your exact values. In old-fashioned bidding you were supposed to cuebid their suit, but that did not let you show your exact values.

♠ Q 9 8 3 ♥ K 7 3 ♦ K J 6 ♣ 8 7 4

Bid 2♠. You have poor spades and poor shape, but you do have good values. You should bid something. Had RHO passed, you would have jumped to 2♠. Jumping to the three-level is not the same as jumping to the two-level, hence the 2♠ bid. If your partner bids again, though, you have a maximum and should continue to game.

♠ 10 8 7 6 3 ♥ A Q ♦ Q 2 ♣ 8 7 6 3

Bid 3♠. With a fifth trump and two doubletons, this hand is worth much more than the previous hand. Don't overlook the extra length in your suit when judging your bid.

♠ 8 ♥ A 8 4 ♦ K J 8 7 6 3 ♣ 8 7 3

Bid 3♦. Bidding just 2♦ is putting too much faith in the 'free' bid. You would, or should, bid 2♦ with five diamonds to the king-queen and nothing else. This hand has 3 more points and an extra diamond. Bid the full value of your hand.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	2♦	?

♠ K 3 ♥ K J 7 6 3 ♦ 4 ♣ J 10 9 6 5

Bid 4♥. In support of hearts you have opening bid strength. You will make game opposite hands that would pass a simple 3♥ bid. Recognize the value of the fifth heart, the working high-card points, and the exceptional shape.

THE 2NT AND 3NT BIDS AFTER RHO RAISES

When the opponents open and raise over partner's takeout double, there is a slight chance that you will have a hand that wants to bid 2NT. In my experience, though, you will wait a long, long time for it. If you get such a hand and you are debating what to do, I suggest you don't bid 2NT unless it is obvious. The reason is easy. The opponents have a suit they can lead. Your partner will have shortness so their attack rates to be effective. Another thing is that your partner will have a minimum hand. If the opponents have enough to open and raise and you have enough to bid 2NT, your partner will have a shapely 11-count. 2NT won't be a good spot.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	2♦	?

♠ 9 7 6 4 ♥ Q J 2 ♦ K Q 9 7 ♣ K 8

This is as good a hand as you rate to have on this sequence. Should you bid 2NT with it? I suggest you bid 2♠. North rates to have a 4-4-1-4 hand with nothing extra. Playing in spades should be better than playing in notrump.

♠ 9 7 6 ♥ Q J 2 ♦ K Q 9 7 ♣ K 8 4

Who knows what to bid? This is the above hand except that you no longer have a suit to bid. Your choices are all imperfect. You can bid 2NT, which will usually go down, your 11 points and all notwithstanding. You can make a responsive double, which will get you into a 4-3 fit. This is a so-so choice. Or you can pass and take a small profit. If you have penalty doubles available you can try doubling, but I suggest against it for two reasons.

The first reason is that it is hard to set low level contracts when declarer has a fit. The second is that you have to give up the responsive double, which is a large loss. My choice out of this selection is to make a responsive double and hope that we can make a partscore in a 4-3 fit.

Just for the record, here is the complete layout.

♠ A K 5 3	N W E S	♠ 10 8
♥ K 7 6 3		♥ 10 9 5
♦ 4		♦ J 6 5 2
♣ Q 6 5 2		♣ A 10 9 3
♠ Q J 4 2		♠ 9 7 6
♥ A 8 4		♥ Q J 2
♦ A 10 8 3		♦ K Q 9 7
♣ J 7		♣ K 8 4

What do you think of your chances in 2NT?

I don't offer a commentary on the result because it doesn't matter. What I do offer is an example of what usually happens when you bid 2NT. You end up in an icky contract that may or may not make. It looks like defending against 2♦ is more likely to get a plus score than bidding. The key is that your high cards do not come with a fit. You would happily trade the ♦KQ in for one more spade and the ♣J. Make this small adjustment and you have a fit that will produce nine tricks.

Other possible 2NT bids:

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	2♦	?
♠ 7 4 ♥ J 4 ♦ K 10 8 3 ♣ A Q 9 8 4			

This is a more realistic 2NT bid. You can see where your tricks are coming from.

♠ 7 4 ♥ J 4 ♦ K 10 8 ♣ A Q 10 7 6 3

Bidding 3NT is sensible. Here you have an extra club. You will usually find that when you make more notrump tricks than your point count suggests, it is because you have a long suit to run. Here you have the long suit, plus you have a good inference that it will run for you.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	3♠	?

♠ A Q ♥ 4 2 ♦ Q J 7 6 5 4 ♣ 10 5 2

3NT rates to be the winning bid. You have a suit you hope to set up in two leads and you have two spade stoppers to give you the necessary timing.

♠ 6 2
♥ K J 7 6
♦ K 8 3
♣ A Q 9 6
♠ A Q
♥ 4 2
♦ Q J 7 6 5 4
♣ 10 5 2

With a spade lead, declarer wins and attacks diamonds. Assuming nothing terrible happens, you should be able to set up the suit immediately. This leaves you with eight tricks but the club finesse ought to work so you have very good chances.

The chances of South having a 14-point hand for a 3NT bid are slim at best.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESPONDING TO A TAKEOUT DOUBLE WHEN RHO BIDS BUT DOES NOT RAISE

When your partner doubles, your RHO has all kinds of things to do. He can raise, which was covered in the previous chapter. This chapter shows may other bids available to East.

RHO BIDS A NEW SUIT AT THE ONE-LEVEL WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BID A SUIT?

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1♥	?

Most pairs play that a new suit at the one-level is forcing, showing at least 6 points. East's 1♥ bid is hardly something to worry about, but you should be aware that your RHO is not broke.

There are many things for you to bid here. As you have probably gathered by now, I suggest you do a lot of bidding when partner makes a takeout double. Even with my recommendation, I must remind you that you have a partner who will expect some tidbit from you when you bid. Keeping in mind that bidding is a good thing to do on this auction, here are some hands to show you how extreme you can be.

♠J 8 7 2 ♥8 7 3 ♦K Q 2 ♣7 6 2

This is about minimum for a 1♣ bid. You may not like doing this, but it is easy to see that your side might make a couple of spades. The way to find out is to bid 1♣ and then retire from the bidding.

If you pass, opener will bid something, and if you later wish to bid spades you will have to do so at the two- or three-level.

If your partner opened 1♣, wouldn't you raise to 2♣? Here, your partner doubled, showing something in spades. When your partner makes a takeout

double and you bid a new suit freely, think of your bid as *raising* partner, not bidding a suit.

Note also that if you bid 1♦, you won't play in 2♦ unless partner has something special to show. Bidding 1♦ is safe because you will never get higher unless partner has the values to keep bidding.

♠ 5 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ K Q 10 6 3 ♣ 9 8 7 3

Bid 2♦. This is not a good hand, but after partner's takeout double it has redeeming qualities. You have a stiff spade and five good diamonds. After awhile, when you have seen a few bids like this work for you, you will start to see some gold in cards like these. Five cards in an unbid suit is already cause for optimism and when the suit is headed by two good honors, it becomes easy to bid it at the one- or two-level.

Of course, if LHO had opened 1♦ instead of 1♣ this hand would have very little redeeming value.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO JUMP IN A NEW SUIT?

It is possible that you will have a good enough hand that you must do more than make a competitive bid. One of the ways you can do that is to make a jump response.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1♥	?

♠ 7 4 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ A Q J 8 6 3 ♣ 9 3

Jump to 3♦. 2♦ doesn't do this hand justice. If partner can bid 3NT, your hand will take a lot of tricks. You would bid 2♦ without the ♦Q and with one less diamond to boot. This is not a close decision.

♠ A K Q 3 ♥ J 4 2 ♦ J 4 3 ♣ 9 8 2

Jump to 2♣. Your shape suggests 1♣ is enough, but your super spades and your two red jacks are just a little too much for that.

♠ Q 7 6 5 3 ♥ K 3 ♦ Q J 5 4 ♣ 3 2

Jump to 2♣. Your modest shape and your five-card suit makes this hand worth a jump.

Partner	You
♠ K J 10 4	♠ Q 7 6 5 3
♥ A J 6 2	♥ K 3
♦ K 8 3	♦ Q J 5 4
♣ 9 4	♣ 3 2

If this is the setup you have nine likely tricks, even though partner has only 12 points. Give partner the ♠A instead of the king and you are on a finesse for a game.

THE WEAK JUMP IN A NEW SUIT — OPTIONAL TREATMENT

Here is a trick which I do not use personally, but which enough good players do use that it is worth a look. Some players who like to bid a lot noticed that they don't have very many hands worth jumping with when RHO bids a new suit. They used this observation to justify a new treatment that allows them to bid even more outrageously. They like to play that a jump shows a weak hand. Their rule is this. If RHO bids a new suit at the one-level or redoubles, a jump shows extra trumps but says nothing about points.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1♥	?
♠ 9 8 6 5 2 ♥ 3 2 ♦ 8 7 6 3 2 ♣ J			

On this auction East has bid 1♥, which is forcing in their partnership. If you want to play a jump as weak, you can bid 2♠. The rationale is that you know the opponents have something. Your shape gives you enough safety that you can bid 2♠ as long as partner knows what you are doing. Your jump may jam the opponents' bidding or it may allow your partner to make an intelligent decision.

This is a good enough treatment, but it creates problems for you when you have the 10-point hand that would normally make a positive jump response. I don't think this treatment is one you should be using, but it is something you may run into. As you will see shortly, I do recommend this treatment when your RHO redoubles.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BID 1NT?

When RHO bids a new suit at the one-level, a 1NT bid shows a decent hand with suitable stoppers. Typically, you need a good 9 points all the way up to some boring 11- or 12-point hands. Some examples:

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1♥	?
♠ J 6 3 ♥ 10 8 3 ♦ K J 3 ♣ K J 9 3			

Bid 1NT. Since partner can double with just 11 HCP, you can't count on him for full opening bid strength. You need a little extra to bid 1NT in a competitive auction. Also, since partner has shown heart strength, you don't need a full stopper in hearts. You do need a stopper in clubs and this you have.

♠ 8 6 2 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ Q 7 2 ♣ Q J 7 2

Pass. Your 8 points opposite partner's likely 11 or 12 won't stretch. Your club cards won't be as useful since West has a good holding over you.

Note this difference – you would respond 1NT if partner opened 1♦. When partner opens the bidding, he promises 12 to 20 points. You bid 1NT because you have to keep the bidding open for partner to show new features of his hand. When partner doubles and both opponents bid, you can be sure your partner doesn't have a 20-point hand. When North makes a takeout double you should try hard to bid one of the suits partner is showing, but you should be slow about bidding 1NT in competition.

One last comment. If East had passed, you would also bid 1NT with this hand. East's 1♥ bid gives you the option of passing.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF YOU DOUBLE?

When RHO bids a suit, you may wish to double it. What you need to know is what a double by you means. There are two possible treatments for a double. It can be for penalty or it can be for takeout.

1. If double is used for penalty

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1♥	?
♠ Q 3 ♥ K Q 8 3 ♦ Q 7 6 4 ♣ 10 7 6			

This is what a penalty double of 1♥ would look like. For the last one hundred years, a double has been used for penalty. If RHO bid 1♥ over partner's double, you would double with this hand. You have four good hearts and you have some high cards. It would be wrong to double 1♥ with five to the queen and nothing else because your partner will take you seriously and play you for some

values. The reason for doubling 1♥ is that it tells your partner that you have some points and exactly four decent hearts. It is possible that your partner can use this information.

- He might be able to double them somewhere.
- He might be able to bid hearts himself.
- He might be able to bid some number of notrump.
- Most importantly, it keeps your side involved in the bidding.

2. If double is used for takeout

If you do not like to use the double of RHO's suit for penalty as discussed above, you can use the double as takeout for the two unbid suits.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1♥	?
<p>♠ 9 7 6 2 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ A Q 8 2 ♣ J 10</p>			

You would like to bid something, but you don't know which suit is best. How can you find an eight-card fit instead of a seven-card fit? If you wish to play double for takeout you can find the best suit. A double here would show the unbid suits, spades and diamonds, and values to be in the bidding.

In this light, doubling shows four spades and four diamonds and 7 or more points. There is an inference that your spades are crummy. With good ones, you would tend to bid 1♣ instead of doubling. Reverse the spades and diamonds and bidding 1♣ would be correct. If you choose to adopt this understanding, you better discuss it with your partner. In the long run this is a useful trick, but it isn't used by everyone. I have taught this topic many times and my impression is that many players have no idea what double should mean. Of the ones that do have an idea, it is about 50-50 between using double as takeout and penalty. I note, though, that using double as takeout comes with a cost. (See below.)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF YOU BID RHO'S SUIT?

Here is another bidding trick that has merit. If you cuebid your RHO's suit, you are making a natural bid.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1♥	?
<p>♠ K 3 ♥ K 10 8 6 2 ♦ 5 4 3 2 ♣ 10 4</p>			

What is best with this? A solution that I like is to play that 2♥, a cuebid of RHO's suit, is natural. It shows a five-card suit and 7 to 9 support points. Partner will treat it as natural and will bid whatever he wants, knowing you have at least five of them. One advantage of this is that if you keep the double of 1♥ for penalty, a double will usually show four hearts, since with five you can bid 2♥ if you have the 7- to 9-point hand.

♠ A 3 ♥ A J 8 4 ♦ 9 7 6 ♣ 8 5 4 3

If you use double of 1♥ as takeout, you lose the chance to double showing four hearts. This is not a small loss. On this hand, for instance, what would you bid over 1♥? For this reason I opt to use double as penalty, not takeout. If your partner has a strong preference, do it his way.

CUEBIDDING OPENER'S SUIT

It is not likely that you will ever wish to cuebid opener's suit.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	1♠	?

A bid of 2♦, cuebidding opener's suit, is rare. I suppose it could be a good hand looking for the best contract. I would not lose sleep over this one.

RHO BIDS A NEW SUIT AT THE TWO-LEVEL

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♦	?

If you play in tournaments, you will find that most players play that a new suit at the two-level is not a strong bid. East rates to have five or six good diamonds, but not much else. If he had a good hand he would have redoubled. You are forced to bid at the two- or three-level so there is some danger from that, but you don't have to fear that your RHO has an 11-point hand. He is likely to have as little as 5 or 6.

You have to know what your opponents are doing. If in doubt, feel free to ask. By now you should have the feeling that you should be looking for reasons to bid rather than reasons to pass. This holds true here. But since you must bid at the two-level or higher, you should use a little caution. In general, though, not much is changed.

♠ J 10 7 2 ♥ 9 8 3 2 ♦ 8 6 ♣ K Q 4

You have a little shape and you have a four-card major you can bid. I suggest bidding 2♠.

♠ K 8 6 5 2 ♥ 8 7 6 2 ♦ 8 2 ♣ J 10

Bid 2♠. The fifth spade is huge and makes this hand worth bidding at the two-level. You have only 4 HCP, but in support of spades the hand is worth closer to 8 or 9.

♠ A 7 3 ♥ 7 6 3 ♦ 9 3 ♣ Q J 9 8 3

Bid 3♣. This is as pushy as you can be at the three-level. With good clubs and a quality 7 HCP, it is necessary to bid with hands like this. For the record, it is safer to bid 2♠ on the previous hand with 4 HCP than to bid 3♣ on this hand with 7 HCP.

♠ A Q 7 ♥ 9 3 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ K J 8 7 2

3♣. This is the other extreme. In competitive auctions it is hard to show your exact strength, hence the wide range for the 3♣ bid. Don't worry. Even if you miss a game or two, you will be pushing them around enough to make up for it. In the old days of competitive bidding you needed a huge hand to bid 3♣. It was practically a game force. The trouble was that when you didn't bid, it often turned out that you should have. Today the winning style seems to be that you should bid a lot and pray. Don't forget that going down is not automatically a bad result. If you go down 50 and the opponents have a partscore, you have done okay. It is these hidden good results that aggressive bidding hopes to achieve.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	2♦	?

♠ A 8 6 2 ♥ K Q 7 6 ♦ 7 3 ♣ J 9 8

Bid 3♥. The jump is invitational. You show four or more hearts and about 10 points. North can pass or continue.

♠ Q J 6 3 ♥ K 2 ♦ Q 7 ♣ K 9 8 5 4

3♣ is the obvious bid but you might choose 2NT instead. You have fair points and good stoppers. The ♦Q7 is fine since your partner implied something in diamonds when he doubled. You would bid 3♣ with less. 2NT is a more accurate bid.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	2♦	?

♠J 8 7 4 ♥A 7 ♦Q 7 5 4 ♣Q 9 8

Double. This is not a likely bid. For whatever it is worth, you are showing at least 8 points and some length in RHO's suit. Mostly nothing happens but if you get to defend you should set 2♦, and if they keep bidding, at least your partner knows you have something.

RHO BIDS 1NT OVER YOUR PARTNER'S DOUBLE

RHO's 1NT bid is a little stronger than normal when made over a takeout double. East would keep the bidding open with a 6-count if North hadn't intervened, but with North doubling there is no reason for East to bid 1NT with a poor hand. East should have a good 7 points up to some 10-pointers. You should still compete when East bids 1NT, but you will notice that most of your sequences stay in the partscore range. You won't have many games when the auction starts this way.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	1NT	?

♠K 2 ♥8 7 6 2 ♦J 2 ♣Q 10 9 7 6

Bid 2♣ for sure. Don't let their bidding scare you out of the pot. You don't want to compete in a four-card minor unless you have a little extra, but with a good five-card suit you can be as pushy as usual.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	1NT	?

♠ 10 8 7 5 3 ♥ 7 6 2 ♦ A 7 6 3 ♣ 9

Bid 2♣. This hand, using my optimistic point count, comes to over 7 points. As usual, I am adding generously for the fifth spade. It's funny how much difference a fit makes. When you pick up this hand, it looks like a crummy hand

with one nice high card and a singleton. As soon as partner tells you he likes spades, your hand doubles in value. Finding a fit is what bidding is all about, but it won't do you any good if the opponents play the hand. At the very least, you may want to get your contribution into the bidding. Maybe partner can bid more knowing you have something.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	1NT	?
♠ Q J 5 3 2	♥ Q 5 4	♦ K J 2	♣ J 5

Bid 2♠ with this hand, too. You would jump to 2♠ if RHO had passed but if his 1NT bid is to be believed, you should respect it and assume your partner has a minimum double. 2♠ is enough.

- What should it mean if you double 1NT?
- What should it mean if you cuebid over RHO's 1NT?
- What should it mean if you bid 2NT over RHO's 1NT?

I suggest something special for all of these three bids.

Here are my ideas about what a double or a cuebid or 2NT should mean when RHO bids 1NT. They are way off the beaten path. I recommend them.

WHAT TRICKS CAN YOU USE WHEN RHO BIDS 1NT OVER YOUR PARTNER'S DOUBLE?

1. If you double 1NT, you are showing the higher and lower unbid suits. Think high-low.
2. If you cuebid opener's suit, you are showing the two higher unbid suits. Think Michaels cuebid.
3. If you bid 2NT, you are showing the lower two unbid suits. Think unusual notrump.

Here are some examples of these three bidding tricks.

When you double 1NT

When you double 1NT, you show the higher and lower unbid suits and a hand worth fighting for a partscore. You won't have many game hands since their side is marked for around half of the high-card points.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1NT	dbl

♠ K 10 7 4 ♥ 9 6 ♦ Q J 8 7 5 ♣ J 10

If you double the 1NT response, it is not penalty. It is for takeout, showing the higher and lower unbid suits. On this auction, the higher suit is spades and the lower suit is diamonds. You usually have four cards in the higher suit and four or more cards in the lower suit. You happen to have an extra diamond, which is just an accident.

The same is true when they are bidding a major.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	1NT	?

♠ J 8 7 5 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ 5 ♣ K Q 10 5 2

Double 1NT, which shows the higher unbid suit and the lower unbid suit. Here, those suits are spades and clubs. The advantage to this bid is that if your partner has three spades he can consider bidding clubs, which might be a better spot.

When you cuebid opener's suit over 1NT

Cuebidding over 1NT shows the two higher-ranking suits with values to be competing for a partscore. You won't often have more than a partscore fight in mind when you make this bid.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	1NT	?

♠ 10 8 7 5 3 ♥ 7 6 5 4 2 ♦ K 3 ♣ 9

You can bid 2♣, cuebidding opener's suit to show you have the two higher-ranking unbid suits, in this case the majors. Here you happen to have 5-5 in the majors. It is not a requirement.

♠ J 9 7 5 ♥ Q 9 7 4 ♦ K 4 ♣ 9 5 4

If you have 4-4 shape, you can make this cuebid with a modest hand like this one. With a hand like this you very much need to find the best major fit.

When you bid 2NT over their 1NT

This always shows the lower two suits. Think of this bid as being related to the unusual notrump bid. You have to be a little bit careful about this bid since you are always going to play at the three-level.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	1NT	?

♠ 7 5 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ Q J 10 5 ♣ K 9 7 5

This hand is too weak to bid 2NT, which would show the minor suits. You can still bid 2♦ if you wish.

♠ 7 5 4 2 ♥ 5 ♦ A J 7 4 ♣ K J 6 4

You have enough to bid 2NT with a pretty clear conscience. Your partner is very likely to have four of a minor since the bidding tells you that he is short in spades.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	1NT	?

♠ 7 3 ♥ J 8 5 4 ♦ 5 3 ♣ A J 8 4 3

I suggest that when you have this weak a hand, you are better off just bidding 2♣. If your hand was slightly better, you could bid 2NT to show the lower unbid suits, hearts and clubs.

♠ 5 3 ♥ Q J 9 4 ♦ J 9 ♣ K Q 8 7 4

Now your hand is good enough that you don't mind going to the three-level. You can bid 2NT with this hand, showing hearts and clubs and a reasonable hand. Your partner will have the information he needs to make a really good bid on occasion.

SUMMING UP THIS METHOD

When RHO bids 1NT after your partner's takeout double, you now have a way to show a two-suited hand. This is important since if you decide to show one suit only by bidding it, you may not be able to show your second suit. I remind you that if you feel one of these two-suited bids will get you higher than you want to go, just bidding one of the suits is a good compromise.

I noted this fact above but wish to repeat it for emphasis. Your side is not looking for a game contract. You are just laying the groundwork for a partscore war. By showing your suits right away, you give your partner important information before opener can get back into the bidding, as he often will.

RHO REDOUBLES OVER YOUR PARTNER'S TAKEOUT DOUBLE

WHEN YOU HAVE A BORING HAND

Most players use redouble to show 10 or more points. When this happens, you usually have a bad hand. Your side may get in trouble and you often need to find a way out. It is not good bridge to pass and let partner do the escaping. If you have an idea where you should play the hand, you should bid right now and help your partner escape a dangerous situation.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	redbl	?

There are many old wives' tales about what your bids mean when RHO redoubles. The worst of them is that a bid is a 'free' bid and promises values. This is nonsense. When RHO redoubles, it is a warning that the hand does not belong to you. Your goal has been redefined. When partner doubled, he expressed that he had a good hand and hoped that your side could make something. The redouble tells you to forget that fiction. The opponents have the majority of the points and they know it.

From this point on, your side's bidding is not aimed at getting to makeable partscores and games. Your side's bidding is entirely aimed at getting out of the auction alive. You are going to get doubled much of the time after East's redouble. Sometimes the best you can do is to escape for down 300. This may not feel like a triumph, but compared to down 500 or 800, there is a lot to be said for getting to the least horrible contract.

The way you get out for minimum damage is by bidding your suits.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	redbl	?
♠ 5 2 ♥ 9 8 6 5 2 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ 8 5 2			

If someone asked you what your best contract is, you would correctly answer that it is 1♥. Not 2♦. 1♥. How do you get to 1♥? For this to happen, someone in your partnership has to bid 1♥.

If your partner believes that a 1♥ bid by you shows 6 or 7 points, you don't dare bid it. If you are playing with such a partner you have to pass and pray that partner has the insight to realize that 1♥ is the spot.

Your partner, unfortunately, is looking at this hand:

♠ A J 10 7 ♥ K J 4 ♦ 10 3 ♣ K Q 7 4

North has to decide what the best contract is. Do you think he will select 1♥ or 1♠? Right. North will bid 1♠ and someone will double.

Good opponents do double. The biggest penalties are gotten when someone bids at the one- or two-level and doesn't find a fit. The reason you don't get big fat penalties at higher levels is that your opponents don't get to crummy high-level contracts. When they bid up to the four- or five-level, it is because they have points and a fit. Yes, they may have been goaded by a preempt, but in general, they don't go for big numbers in high-level contracts.

Look at the North and South hands.

♠	A J 10 7
♥	K J 4
♦	10 3
♣	K Q 7 4

♠	5 2
♥	9 8 6 5 2
♦	8 7 2
♣	8 5 2

If your partner plays in 1♠ doubled, he will get two spades and one club. He won't get a heart trick because he can't get to dummy to lead toward the king-jack. Even at the one-level, you are at risk of going down four. If you pass the redouble your partner will bid 1♠, someone will double, and finally, you will awaken to the fact that hearts is your only salvation. Your reward for not bidding 1♥ is that you get to play in 2♥. Doubled. 2♥ isn't a piece of cake. It rates to go down two or three. 1♥, of course, would have gone down only one or two.

So much for the theory of 'free' bids. Try using common sense instead. When your side is in over its head, you must redefine what your bids mean.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF YOU PASS THE REDOUBLE?

If you agree that you would try to find a bid if you had anything at all to say, then when you pass you are telling your partner that it is up to him to escape. He will not think you want to defend against their redoubled contract. He will think that you do not have any ideas on where to go.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	redbl	pass

Passing East's redouble says you have nothing to bid. By definition, your side is in trouble and you want to find the safest home, but you don't know where it is. Your pass asks partner to do the rescuing. This is an important definition to have. Important enough that it can be a rule.

RULE

When your partner doubles a suit and RHO redoubles, a pass by you is *not for penalty*. It says you do not know the best escape suit and demands that the doubler bid something.

ANOTHER RULE

You should not try to play in notrump. Your side has a maximum of 17 points. Playing in 1NT will be ruinous. Try to find a suit.

Here are some example hands.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	redbl	?

♠ 9 7 6 ♥ 8 7 3 ♦ Q J 5 ♣ J 8 6 5

This is what a pass looks like. You have four clubs, but you also have modest support for the two majors. Pass and let partner pick the spot. Of special importance is that you do not bid 1NT. My editor will not let me describe how poor a bid that would be.

♠ 8 ♥ 8 7 6 3 ♦ 9 7 6 4 ♣ K 8 6 3

Bid 1♥. This is not a good suit. But the bid is okay. If you pass, your partner will bid spades. Your choices will be to leave partner in 1♠ doubled (someone *will* double it) or you will have to start looking for a better suit at the two-level. Note that the reason you are bidding such a poor suit is that it is dangerous to pass. You are, in essence, trying to save partner from himself.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	redbl	?
♠ J 8 3	♥ 6 3 2	♦ J 8 7 6 3	♣ 10 5

Plan ahead. It is tempting to bid 2♦, but doing so means you can't get to spades if they are right. Pass. If North bids 1♠, you are happy enough. If he bids 2♣, you will correct to 2♦. In both cases you will be in an acceptable contract. By bidding diamonds, you are putting all your eggs in one basket.

A useful insight – It is much easier for the opponents to double a two-level contract than it is to double a one-level contract. When you are in danger, it is best to look for one-level safety first.

♠ 8 4 ♥ J 8 7 4 ♦ J 9 8 7 4 ♣ 9 3

It is okay to bid 2♦ with this hand. You are not losing out on other trump suits. Diamonds is the only playable suit you have, so it is okay to bid it. Bid 2♦ with confidence. You are not required to look and sound miserable when you are, in fact, miserable. Try to look like you are enjoying the whole thing.

THREE EXPERT TRICKS THAT YOU CAN USE WHEN RHO REDOUBLES

There are three agreements you should add to your understandings when your partner makes a takeout double and RHO redoubles. These agreements are logical and useful. Your partnership should use them. A couple of more obscure agreements will be shown later (page 192).

Trick one after RHO redoubles

The first expert trick is this. When your RHO redoubles, you should play that a jump bid by you is no longer an invitational bid. You should play it shows a weak hand with good playing strength. The reason is that even though they have the majority of the points, they may not know where to play. By jumping in your long suit, you are taking away their bidding space. Here is a classic hand. It shows a very good auction by North and South. Look at this sequence closely.

E-W vul.

	♦ K J 8 6	
	♥ A 7 2	
	♦ K 10 9 6 3	
	♣ 6	
♠ 10 4		♠ A 2
♥ Q J 9 4		♥ K 10 6 5
♦ A 4 2		♦ Q 7
♣ A Q J 3		♣ K 9 5 4 2
	N	
W		E
S		
♠ Q 9 7 5 3		
♥ 8 3		
♦ J 8 5		
♣ 10 8 7		

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	redbl	2♠
pass	3♠	?	

The only game for East-West is 4♥. It is cold. 3NT and 5♣ both go down.

Looking at the auction from the East-West point of view, how do you feel about what has happened and what is about to happen? Do you think East-West will get to 4♥ after this start? Here is a discussion of what went wrong and suggestions for doing better in the future.

West – 1♣. This is a normal opening bid in any standard system.

North – Double. North has a minimum but acceptable double. It is far superior to bidding 1♦.

East – Redouble. This is the start of the problem.

East has 12 points so has a ‘book’ redouble. By the book, however, isn’t always best and it hurts East-West here. East can see that he won’t want to double spades when the opponents find them, so he shouldn’t bother redoubling. East should start showing his hand right away. The correct bid by East is 1♥.

Since this isn’t a book on bidding over takeout doubles, I will say only this. You should play that a new suit at the one-level over a takeout double is more or less the same as if there had been no double. The 1♥ bid is forcing and subsequent bids have their normal meaning.

South – 2♠. A great bid. South doesn’t have a good hand.

In fact, he can’t have a good hand. West has an opening bid, North has a takeout double, and East has a redouble. If you add it up, South cannot have more than 3 or 4 points. If you agree that it is logical that South won’t have good hands, then you will agree that using a jump to show a weak hand with a good fit has merit. Why play that a jump is invitational if you never have a good enough hand for it?

West – Pass. What can West do but pass to see what East is up to?

North – 3♠. North knows South is weak. With good spades and good shape, North raises to make it harder for East to bid. It would be reasonable for North to leap to 4♠ at this vulnerability.

East – ? East has no good bid. Should he double? Should he raise clubs? Should he bid hearts on a four-card suit?

On this hand, West has four hearts so bidding hearts will work. But West might have only two or three hearts. Should East pass and give the problem back to West?

I think that East-West are in trouble now and even with all their points, they are going to miss their 4♥ contract.

Look again at South's hand. It is a weak hand, but it does have a five-card major and a couple of modest honor cards. Now look at the combined North-South cards. South can actually make 2♠. In 3♠, if he plays there, he will go down one. This is a small price to pay for the game the opponents have.

Here are some additional examples of South's bidding trick.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	redbl	?

♠ 7 6 3 ♥ 3 2 ♦ J 10 7 6 5 2 ♣ 8 7

With a six-card suit, it is safe to bid 2♦. As long as partner knows you have a weak hand, you can make bids like this to good effect. In fact, if your side is not vulnerable and their side is vulnerable, bidding 3♦ is not a bad idea. You only need to take six tricks if they double you. That would be down 500 against an almost certain game for them.

♠ 6 ♥ Q 10 8 7 6 3 ♦ 4 3 ♣ 10 9 8 5

Here you have a six-card suit with an honor, plus great shape. You should definitely bid 3♥ with this one.

REMEMBER – These jump bids are based on playing strength, not high-card points. Here is an important thought. These jump responses do more than just hinder the opponents. They describe your hand to partner, who may be able to use the information.

The hand above has a history. It came up at the Lancaster Nationals when I was playing with Eddie Kantar. Eddie was West and I was East with the little hand with six hearts.

No one was vulnerable. This was the complete auction.

West	North	East	South
			1♣
dbl	redbl	3♥	3♠
5♥	5♠	pass	pass
pass			

My jump to 3♥ told Eddie that I was broke but that I had a long suit and probably a little shape. Eddie saw they must have a game so he bid 5♥ to put pressure on the opponents. Let them guess at the five-level before they had a confirmed fit. Here is the complete hand:

Eddie Kantar	Mike Lawrence
♠ A 9 2	♠ 6
♥ A K 4 2	♥ Q 10 8 7 6 3
♦ K J 7 5 2	♦ 4 3
♣ 6	♣ 10 9 8 5
	♠ K 10 7 5 3
	♥ J 5
	♦ Q
	♣ A K 7 3 2

Getting them to 5♣ was half the battle. If we can't beat it, an exciting moment in the bidding will be to no avail. What would you lead from Eddie's hand?

Eschewing the ♥AK, he led the ♣6. It was unlikely that we had more than one heart trick. Perhaps he could come in with the ♠A and get me in for a club ruff. Declarer won the club lead in dummy and starting drawing trumps by leading the queen. Eddie, not sure whether I had the ♥Q, played low on the first spade. Dummy continued with a second spade. What should East discard? The answer is that East should discard the ♦3. This signal obviously says not to lead diamonds, but it also says something else. If East had the ♥A or ♥K, he would discard a high heart to show an entry there. The diamond discard obviously denies a high heart.

From Eddie's point of view, he already knew about the top heart honors. He was more interested in the queen. Should he underlead the ace and king, hoping for East to have the queen?

The answer is yes, and he made the play at the table. How did he know? It was a case of no news is good news. If East had the ♥A or ♥K, he would signal that he had it. If East had only little hearts, he would signal that he had nothing in hearts. By not signaling in hearts, East showed that he had the queen, but

not one of the high ones. When the $\heartsuit Q$ won, Eddie got his ruff and $5\spades$ was down one.

Note that without the $3\heartsuit$ bid, West would not know to compete to $5\heartsuit$. East's hand is too weak to go to $5\heartsuit$ all by itself. It would be foolish to bid $5\heartsuit$ and find a dummy with four spades and three hearts. Bidding $3\heartsuit$ was just the right amount. It let the doubler decide what to do, which is wiser than making a unilateral decision at the five-level.

In a serious vein, you should look at the complete hand and study why North's redouble was a bad idea. It gave the opponents the ability to make a mess of the North-South auction. Incidentally, you might consider if South's $1\clubsuit$ bid was a good idea as opposed to $1\spades$.

Trick two after RHO redoubles

The second expert trick you can use when partner doubles and they redouble is necessary to help you bid when, miracle of miracles, you do have a good hand.

West	North	East	South
1 \heartsuit	dbl	redbl	?

$\spadesuit Q\ 8\ 7\ 2\ \heartsuit 7\ 2\ \diamond K\ Q\ 8\ \clubsuit J\ 10\ 9\ 5$

Pass. This is an impossible hand. You can't have this much if everyone is honest. Since bidding over the redouble shows a weak hand, you should pass and do something on the next round. Whatever suit partner bids, for example, you will raise. This hand comes under the heading of food for thought. I have had the theme come up a few times so I can vouch for its possible usage.

Trick three after RHO redoubles

The third expert trick is as dangerous as they come. When you are in one of these scary redouble sequences, you can have this agreement. When you are in trouble, your side never plays in a low-level redoubled contract.

Redouble always means that you want partner to bid another suit. Using this agreement, you can sometimes bid 1NT as a stepping-stone to runout redouble.

West	North	East	South
1 \heartsuit	dbl	redbl	?

$\spadesuit 6\ 5\ \heartsuit 7\ 6\ 3\ \diamond J\ 10\ 8\ 7\ \clubsuit Q\ 10\ 4\ 2$

You want partner to select a minor suit. If you guess which one to bid you may choose the wrong one. There are two ways to get partner to bid a minor suit.

You can bid 1NT and, when doubled, redouble. If partner passes, you go for about 2200. But if he bids a minor, as you hope, you will be in your best spot. Since North can have five of one minor and three of the other, it behooves you to get to the right suit.

Alternatively, you can pass the redouble. If North bids a minor, you are happy. If North bids 1♠, however, they will double and you will redouble for SOS. North will bid his better minor. I prefer passing and redoubling if partner bids something I do not like.

Here is an example showing how you might make not one, but two SOS redoubles on a hand.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	redbl	?
♠ 8 7 4 2 ♥ Q 7 6 4 ♦ 10 7 6 5 ♣ 2			

Another horror. With this bad a hand, you can't afford to end up in the wrong suit. You can guess which red suit to bid, which will be a big loser if you guess wrong. Or you can let partner do it himself.

Again, there are two ways to do it. You can bid 1NT and then redouble when they double you, as they will. If North bids a red suit, you pass of course. If he bids 2♣, they will double and you will redouble again. The two redoubles by South on this hand are both SOS bids.

Alternatively, you can pass the redouble and wait to see what partner does. Assuming he bids 2♣, you will redouble and get right out of them.

If your partner bids 1NT and gets doubled, you will redouble asking him to bid a suit. As before, if he bids a red suit, you pass. If he bids clubs and gets doubled, redouble and ask him to try one more time.

E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	redbl	?
♠ 6 ♥ 7 4 ♦ J 9 8 6 5 3 2 ♣ 10 7 6			

You have to pass and would prefer that partner pass too. But he won't. When you pass 1♦ doubled and redoubled, you are not telling North to pass. You are letting partner do the running. If by some chance partner bids 2♣, you will pass. More likely, partner will bid 1♥ or 1♠. Now you can bid 2♦ and partner will, or should, know to pass.

Here are some of these auctions as seen by the takeout doubler.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
redbl	pass	pass	1♠
dbl	redbl	pass	?

♠ A Q J 7 ♥ 8 5 ♦ Q 9 5 3 ♣ A 9 5

You doubled and the next player redoubled. When your partner passed, you had to escape yourself. You bid spades, hoping to escape there. It did not work. You got doubled and your partner redoubled. In keeping with the third rule (trick three) above, your side never redoubles to say you want to play when you are in known danger. Partner's redouble asked you to escape. With four diamonds and three clubs, you bid 2♦. Here is a possible hand for your partner:

♠ 8 ♥ J 7 6 3 ♦ J 10 6 2 ♣ Q 7 6 4

2♦ won't be victory for you, but it will be less of a disaster than playing in 2♣ doubled. At least in diamonds you have eight trumps. Getting to an eight-card fit rates to be a couple of tricks better than getting to a seven-card fit.

The next hand is from actual play. The bidding went as indicated, leaving South to solve a scary problem.

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

♠ A 9 8 ♥ Q J 10 6 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ A Q J

Bid 2♦. This bid shows great trust in your partner. If you accept the 2♦ bid for the right reasons, your judgment is in good shape.

The reasons for bidding 2♦ are clear. North hates hearts and didn't bid spades. His redouble is asking you to choose from the two minor suits! This is what North had:

♠ 7 2 ♥ 4 ♦ Q 10 8 5 3 2 ♣ 9 8 7 4

North hates the major suits, but his clubs are not so great that he wants to insist on them. The redouble shows far more diamonds than clubs and asks South to choose a minor accordingly. Here, South has three of both minors so he bids diamonds.

CHAPTER NINE RHO OPENS AND LHO BIDS SOMETHING, PARTNER DOUBLES FOR TAKEOUT

This section covers hands where both opponents have bid before partner doubles. Here are some examples of this kind of bidding. As always, no one is vulnerable unless otherwise noted.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
1♥	dbl	pass	?
		1♥	pass
2♥	dbl	pass	?
		1♥	pass
2♥	dbl	3♥	?
		1♦	pass
INT	dbl	pass	?

RHO BIDS A SUIT AND LHO BIDS A SUIT. PARTNER DOUBLES

Partner's double is takeout, promising normal values. Your bidding is pretty straightforward but there are still a couple of little traps to be aware of.

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

♠ K 5 4 ♥ 9 7 5 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ Q 8 4 2

Bid 2♣. Not too much to this hand. Your partner doubled 1♥, showing spades and clubs. You have a poor hand but you do have four clubs and two nice high cards. Bid 2♣ and expect not to bid again. Note that your partner promises four

cards in both unbid suits. He can double without four cards in all suits when he doubles a one-bid, but this is not true when the opponents have bid two suits.

♠ Q 9 4 ♥ K 8 7 3 2 ♦ 8 5 ♣ 10 8 4

Bid 1♠. When partner doubles after two suits have been bid, you sometimes won't have a four-card suit to bid. When this happens, the solution is often to bid a three-card suit.

♠ K J 6 5 ♥ 9 5 4 3 ♦ 5 3 ♣ A J 7

Bid 2♠. This shows invitational values.

♠ 9 4 ♥ K 8 7 3 2 ♦ Q J 5 4 ♣ 10 4

Bid 1NT. Not beautiful but you do not have a sane alternative. Passing 1♥ for penalty is a distant second choice. Some of the time you can bid a three-card suit, but that is not possible here.

♠ 4 ♥ Q 8 5 4 ♦ J 10 8 7 5 4 ♣ Q 4

Bid 2♦. This hand can happen and when it does, bidding opener's suit may be your only hope. You are not making a strong cuebid. You are making a natural bid in hopes that you can play there.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
1♥	dbl	2♦	?

♠ A J 4 3 ♥ 10 8 7 5 4 ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ 4

Bid 2♠. When partner asks you to bid a suit and you have this nice a holding, you should bid it if you can do so cheaply.

♠ 8 4 3 ♥ A Q J 3 ♦ Q 8 7 ♣ J 9 4

Pass. You have a lot of points but given both opponents are bidding, your partner rates to have a minimum double. An excellent rule of thumb is to compete when you have a fit but to go quietly when you do not have a fit. This 10-pointer does not warrant a fight.

RHO BIDS A SUIT AND LHO BIDS 1NT. PARTNER DOUBLES

Partner's double shows a hand that would have doubled opener's bid if he had the chance. He is not making a penalty double.

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

♠ J 7 4 ♥ 10 5 2 ♦ K J 8 7 4 ♣ Q 2

- 2♦. Partner should have all three unbid suits so you bid your diamonds.

♠ A 8 4 3 ♥ Q 10 8 7 ♦ J 8 7 4 ♣ 8

Bid 2♣. This is a cuebid. It is not a natural bid. If LHO had bid a suit and partner doubled, your 2♣ bid would show clubs. This is not true after a 1NT response. Your cuebid just shows a hand that wants to find the best trump suit.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
1NT	dbl	2♣	?

♠ Q 10 2 ♥ Q J 8 7 5 ♦ 3 ♣ K 5 4 2

Bid 2♥. You have a five-card suit and modest values. As long as you know partner's double is takeout you should have no trouble bidding with this hand.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	pass
1NT ¹	dbl	3♥	?

1. Forcing

♠ A Q 7 4 3 ♥ 8 4 3 ♦ Q 3 ♣ J 10 5

You might wonder where everyone is finding their bids. Today, many players play that 1NT is forcing and they make this bid with trash. You should assume your partner is for real and should bid 4♣ with this. You have good points and a very nice five-card suit. Partner's double hints he is short in hearts. You would bid 3♣ without the minor-suit high cards. Note, by the way, that this hand might be worth a 1♣ overcall for some.

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

♠ J 10 8 ♥ Q 8 4 ♦ Q J 10 8 7 ♣ K 2

Pass. You know they won't take any extra diamond tricks and you have pushers in the other three suits. Whatever partner leads is okay with you. Importantly, he will know you have diamonds stopped and he is likely to lead one of those, which would suit you.

RHO BIDS A SUIT AND LHO RAISES. PARTNER DOUBLES

This is the auction that starts a lot of battles. They have a fit and your side is likely to have a good fit too. When both sides have fits, there can be a lot of tricks available. You will want to try hard to bid after this sequence.

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

♠ K 3 ♥ 10 8 7 5 4 ♦ 9 8 3 ♣ K 3 2

Bid 2♥, but be willing to bid 3♥ if they continue to 3♦, as they often do.

IMPORTANT

When they bid and raise a suit, your partner will double with some light hands that include good shape. He is afraid that if he passes, you might not be able to reopen the bidding yourself. He could double 2♦ with this hand, for instance:

♠ Q 10 8 7 ♥ K J 9 3 ♦ 4 ♣ A 8 7 4

This hand has excellent shape and limited but useful values. If North does not double, he risks being shut out of the bidding. This is a clear double, even if vulnerable.

♠ A Q 3 ♥ J 7 5 ♦ 10 8 4 3 ♣ 8 5 4

Bid 2♥. Partner chose a bad moment to double 2♦. You do not have a suit to bid and passing is a sure disaster. Bid 2♥ confidently, and hope your side stops bidding. At least you have some useful cards in the majors.

West	North	East	South
2♥	dbl	1♥	pass
		pass	?

♠ A 4 ♥ 10 9 7 4 ♦ 4 ♣ K Q 8 6 5 2

This is a very nice hand. At the very least you should bid 4♣. Bidding 5♣ is not unreasonable. A common error is for someone to underbid on one of these sequences where they bid and raise and partner doubles. You can usually exercise good judgment on these sequences. Failure to do so can be costly.

RHO BIDS A SUIT AND LHO MAKES A TWO-OVER-ONE BID. PARTNER DOUBLES OR BIDS A SUIT

West	North	East	South
2♦	dbl	1♥	pass
		pass	?

This is the auction I warned about. When they bid this way, assuming they are using normal bidding, responder has a good hand. Your side won't have much and as a rule you should stay out of the bidding.

♠ 10 8 2 ♥ Q J 7 4 3 ♦ 8 7 4 2 ♣ 2

Bid 2♦, your longest unbid suit. Your partner should be bidding on shape, not on high-card points. He rates to have five reasonable spades and five reasonable clubs. On this hand your side has nothing good going for it.

♠ Q 2 ♥ 6 2 ♦ 9 8 7 4 ♣ J 8 7 5 4

You want to bid some extreme number of clubs. On this hand you expect they have a sure game in hearts but you do not want to bid too high and go down too many. You should note the vulnerability and bid accordingly.

If no one is vulnerable, you might bid 4♣. It will go down two or three but you are leaving them room to make an incorrect decision.

If both sides are vulnerable, I would still suggest bidding 4♣.

If you are vulnerable and they are not, you have to be very careful because bidding 4♣ and going down two tricks will be bad. Against this danger is the fact that your partner knew the vulnerability when he doubled. So again, 4♣ might be the winning bid. The opponents won't have a lot of club tricks so probably they will not be quick to double you.

If they are vulnerable and you are not, you should bid 5♣. You are sure they have a game, which will be worth at least 620 points. You can afford to go down three tricks. Bidding 5♣ makes them guess at the five-level. Since they have not yet agreed on a trump suit, they will not be sure what to do. 5♣ by you is a good pressure bid that really sticks it to the opponents.

ASIDE

The same principles that change your double after a two-over-one response apply to your overcalls after a two-over-one response.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
2♣	2♥	pass	?

♠ 10 8 7 4 3 ♥ Q 8 7 4 ♦ 3 ♣ 10 9 4

Bid 3♥. If the vulnerability is green, meaning they are vulnerable and you are not, bidding 4♥ would be a good idea. You know they have the high cards. This tells you that your partner has a nice heart suit and enough shape that he feels like bidding. He is looking at the vulnerability too so he is bidding aggressively but with appropriate caution. His goal is not to find a making contract but to bother their bidding. With four-card support and some shape, you are entitled to do something. At the least, raising to 3♥ is mandatory.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	pass
2♣	3♥	pass	?

♠ Q 10 8 7 4 ♥ A 8 4 ♦ 3 2 ♣ J 8 4

Raise to 4♥. All you need to know is that partner's jump to 3♥ is a weak bid. He knows they have the high-card points so he should have a good suit. He does not need much more than that. Here is a hand that might bid 3♥ over the 2♣ bid:

♠ 6 ♥ K J 10 7 6 5 3 ♦ J 10 7 ♣ 5 3

Your partner will note the vulnerability when he makes a bid like this. The hand shown is good for 3♥ if not vul. vs. vul.

He needs a little more playing strength on different vulnerabilities. The key is that you know what to expect when partner makes this jump overcall.

CHAPTER TEN

A NUMBER OF SITUATIONS INVOLVING DELAYED DOUBLES & SOME JUDGMENT

WHAT IS PARTNER DOING?

The most common takeout double comes when an opponent opens the bidding and the next player doubles. This chapter will discuss auctions where partner makes a delayed double. It includes a lot of examples which will show you what to expect when your partner comes up with one of these doubles. Here are some examples, offered in no particular order.

1.	West	North	East	South
	1♦	pass	1♥	pass
	2♦	dbl	pass	?

♠ Q J 7 5 ♥ Q 8 4 3 ♦ 4 ♣ K 7 5 4

What does North's double show?

North's double is penalty. East did not show or even hint he has diamond support. In this case North's double is not takeout.

What should South bid?

South should pass. If he misunderstands North's double and bids something it would not be a good result. Here is a possible North hand:

♠ 9 8 ♥ K 10 9 ♦ A Q J 8 5 ♣ A 9 2

2.	West	North	East	South
	1♦	1♠	2♦	pass
	pass	dbl	pass	?

♠ 8 5 ♥ Q 8 7 6 4 ♦ Q 7 4 ♣ Q 8 7

What does North's double show?

This is a classic auction. North overcalled 1♠ and then doubled 2♦. He is not making a penalty double, he is making a takeout double. He probably has five spades with three-card support for the unbid suits. He definitely has more than a minimum overcall. Given he has proper shape for this double, he should have at least 13 useful HCP.

What should South bid?

Bid 2♥. It is easy to find the right bid once you recognize that North's double is takeout. North has a hand like this one:

♠ A J 7 4 3 ♥ K 10 2 ♦ 8 ♣ A J 10 3

Note that North does not have a huge hand. The bidding tells him that you have some values and since you did not bid, North is just looking for a fit in a suit that you like. North will not bid again with this hand.

3.	West	North	East	South
	1♦	pass	1♥	pass
	1NT	dbl	pass	?

♠ 10 8 7 2 ♥ K J 9 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ K 7 3

What does North's double show?

North is making a takeout double. He didn't bid over 1♦ so it is likely that he has long diamonds and short hearts, which is why he did not bid the round before. Ideally he has a hand like this one:

♠ A Q 9 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ J 9 5 ♣ A Q 9 4

He should have four cards in each of the unbid suits.

What should South bid?

Bid 2♣. Actually you have a decent hand since you have a four-card suit to bid and you have two honor cards that may prove helpful.

4.	West	North	East	South
		1♠	2♣	pass
	3♣	dbl	pass	?

♠ 5 ♥ Q J 8 5 4 ♦ Q 9 8 2 ♣ 9 7 3

What does North's double show?

North's double is takeout. This double shows a good hand since there is a likelihood that you have a weak hand and your side is at the three-level.

What should South bid?

Bid 4♥. You know North is asking you to bid and you have a super hand under the circumstances. You didn't make a negative double so what you have is as much as your partner can hope for. North should have something like this hand:

♠ K Q 10 6 4 ♥ A K 9 ♦ A J 7 5 ♣ 4

You will have to work hard to make 4♥ but in the event that North has four hearts, it should be pretty easy. The important feature of this hand is that South knows North has a good takeout double, requiring South to do more than bid a lazy 3♥.

5.	West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♦	pass	pass
	2♥	dbl	pass	?

♠ K 7 5 4 3 ♥ J 8 5 ♦ J ♣ J 8 7 4

What does North's double show?

As is often the case, partner's double is takeout. Only a few specific situations exist where North's low-level double is penalty.

What should South bid?

Bid 3♣. North should have five or six diamonds and four clubs. Something like this:

♠ 10 ♥ K 4 ♦ A K 9 8 7 4 ♣ K Q 10 5

Given that North is taking a second bid, he does well to get clubs in the game. Insisting on diamonds is a mistake.

6.	West	North	East	South
	1♠	dbl	2♠	pass
	3♠ ¹	dbl	pass	?

1. Preemptive

♠ 10 7 4 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ Q 3 ♣ Q 9 7 4 3

What does North's second double show?

North is making yet another takeout double. East's raise to 2♠ doesn't show much and West's 3♠ bid is a preemptive bid, not looking for a game contract, just looking to be annoying to your side. When opponents bid this way you might need to ask what their bids mean. Do not ask, however, unless it is urgent that you know.

What should South bid?

Bid 4♣. South has a wonderful hand for this bidding. Imagine that South had the same high cards but had 4-3-3-3 shape instead. Having a five-card suit, headed by an honor yet, along with a useful queen on the side, makes this

a happy 4♦ bid. If you had only three-card suits to bid, you would know the meaning of a bad hand.

Here is an interesting observation. This diagram shows a possible layout with your hand facing the kind of good hand your partner should have.

♠	8
♥	A K 10 7
♦	K J 9 4
♣	A J 10 8

♠	10 7 4 3
♥	8 3
♦	Q 3
♣	Q 9 7 4 3

Your little hand is so good that your side might make 5♣! If you were lamenting how bad your hand was, this layout should give you a second opinion.

7.	West	North	East	South
		1NT	2♥	pass
	pass	dbl	pass	?

♠ J 8 4 ♥ 9 4 ♦ Q 4 3 ♣ J 10 7 4 2

What does North's double show?

North's double is takeout. This is a situation that I have not talked about since there was no convenient place to put it. The idea is that your partner bid 1NT and the next player overcalled 2♥. It is not likely that your partner has a good penalty double because his hearts are in front of the heart bidder. Players have discovered that a double from North in this situation is best played as takeout.

What should South bid?

Bid 3♣. North is asking you to bid. You have a five-card club suit and you actually have a couple of potentially useful cards. This is not a good hand but it is not a bad hand either. Here is a likely hand for partner to have:

♠ K 10 7 3 ♥ 8 2 ♦ A K 10 5 ♣ A Q 9

Partner is hoping you have just a little something, which will mean your side can make something your way. A good choice. From North's perspective, declarer will take a lot of heart tricks and usually can generate a trick or two on

the side. This is an important sequence. Note that if you had four hearts and a few values, passing 2♥ doubled for penalty is an option.

8.	West	North	East	South
	1♣	dbl	1♦	pass
	2♣	dbl	pass	2♥
	pass	3♥	pass	?

♠ 10 9 2 ♥ Q J 8 7 4 ♦ 8 6 ♣ 9 4 3

What has North shown so far?

North's first double was takeout.

His second double was takeout too but promises more than his original double.

His 3♥ bid shows that he has his second double plus something extra. He is asking if you have anything at all.

What should South bid?

Bid 4♥. This is a clear decision. Here is a typical hand for him to have. Note that his raise promises four-card heart support. You might have bid 2♥ on four little ones so he must have four to make this strong raise.

♠ K Q 8 ♥ A K 9 3 ♦ A K 7 4 ♣ 10 7

Your good five-card heart suit makes 4♥ nearly invincible. Note that if you had only four little hearts, stopping in 3♥ would be a good idea.

9.	West	North	East	South
	1♠	pass	1NT	pass
	2♠	dbl	pass	?

♠ 2 ♥ 8 3 2 ♦ Q 3 2 ♣ Q 9 7 4 3 2

What does North's double show?

This double is penalty. When opener bids and rebids a major after a one-level response from his partner, double is penalty.

What should South bid?

Pass. North says he can beat 2♠ and South has no reason to think otherwise.

North has something like this hand:

♠ Q J 9 8 7 ♥ K Q J 7 ♦ A K 10 ♣ 5

This double is typical. He has a stack in spades with winners on the side. Note that he would not like hearing you bid 3♣.

10.	West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl	pass
	2♠	dbl	pass	?

♠ 9 7 4 3 ♥ 9 6 ♦ 8 5 4 ♣ J 9 7 4

South expected to have no decisions on this hand but when North opened 1♥ and then doubled 2♠, he gave South a decision.

What is North doing?

He is making a takeout double in the face of the opponents' relatively strong bidding.

What should South bid?

This hand is terrible but South has to do something. Passing 2♠ doubled is out of the question. The odds against your beating it are 25:1. Might be worse. South should bid 3♣, showing his best suit. Here are two possible hands for North:

♠ 2 ♥ A Q J 7 4 ♦ A K 6 3 ♣ K Q 3

♠ — ♥ A K 7 4 2 ♦ K Q 7 3 ♣ K Q 6 3

Both of these hands are good enough that North can hope for a makeable contract for his side. On the first hand you will play in a nervous 3♣ contract. On the second you will be in a good 3♣ contract. Against this, you can see the problems you would have in defending against 2♠ doubled.

11.	West	North	East	South
	1♦	2♦	3♦	pass
	pass	dbl	pass	?

♠ 7 3 ♥ 10 4 ♦ 10 8 7 4 ♣ Q J 10 9 8

What was partner's 2♦ bid?

What was his double?

North is making an odd double. His 2♦ bid showed both majors. His minimum for this bid is about 8 HCP when not vulnerable. His double says he has a stronger hand but he still says he has the majors. He is hoping you have a three- or four-card major. He knows you have a weak hand but if you have a three- or four-card major, you will still be okay to bid it.

But you do not have a three-card major.

What should South bid?

Pass. South is sure that bidding a major will be bad since his hand is just too hopeless for words. South does have something good on defense. He has four diamonds. These alone might be enough to hinder declarer in the play. Just reflect on how often you have played a hand and run into a 4-1 trump break. It can be hard on you. In addition, you have a good club holding such that it might be worth a trick on defense. Passing is your best chance to go plus on this hand. Here is a possible hand for partner:

♠ K Q 10 8 2 ♥ A K 9 5 2 ♦ 3 ♣ K 2

If East was a little pushy with his 3♦ bid, you might end up setting them a couple of tricks.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

DOUBLER'S CONTINUATIONS — COMMON BIDDING SITUATIONS

This chapter shows common bidding situations and gives examples of what you should be thinking. The next chapter will discuss some really difficult situations such as what you should do when you have a big hand with only three-card support for your partner.

After making a takeout double, what you do later in the bidding is heavily dependent upon what your partner does. On many auctions the opponents will be as busy, or busier, than you are, so you will have a lot to think about. One instinct you must suppress is the urge to raise partner's suit when the bidding is competitive. Your double told a clear story, so if you decide to raise you need a good reason.

PARTNER PASSES THE DOUBLE FOR PENALTY

When you make a takeout double and partner passes, what usually happens is that you end up on opening lead. If this happens, you should always lead a trump. For you to set them you need seven tricks, which, in effect, means your side is declaring the hand. When you are declaring a hand it is usually right for you to draw trumps before the opponents ruff your winners. The same thing applies when you double and partner passes. You don't want declarer to ruff any of your winners and the way to avoid that is to draw trump. Remember. Your partner heard your double and passed it out. He should have good trumps. If he has five or six schlocky trumps like Q9754, he shouldn't pass. He should find a bid.

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

Once in awhile, your RHO will bid something and you will have to decide whether to bid a suit, double, or pass. The important thing is to realize that your partner is not showing a good hand; he is showing he has a good holding in opener's first suit. If you have an average double, you should pass and see what your partner wants to do. If you have a big hand that does not want partner to pass it out, you can do something if it feels right.

LHO BIDS AND YOUR PARTNER PASSES

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♥	pass		

When LHO bids something and your partner passes, you can assume your partner has a maximum of 7 points. He could have more, but it will be rare. This statement probably varies from partnership to partnership. If you agree with the first half of this book your partner will be bidding with many of his 6- and 7-point hands. When you make a takeout double, your partner knows immediately whether your side can make something. It is necessary for him to tell you so you can judge how to continue.

When your partner doesn't bid, it is still possible that you will bid again. The following hands will show what you need to do that. Note that there are no examples of big hands where you doubled with the intent to bid a suit later. Those were discussed earlier. Anyway, if you have one of those hands, you won't need any encouragement from me to get you to bid.

One more observation. If you play responsive doubles, there will be some sequences where you can draw inferences from partner's pass. I will make references to them where applicable.

E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♥	pass	1♠	?

♠ K J 3 ♥ A 10 7 6 ♦ 7 ♣ K Q 5 4 2

Pass. This is a reminder hand. Your partner didn't bid so you expect he has a maximum of 7 points. Usually he will have less. If you bid 2♣ with this, you show a big hand. This is an ordinary takeout double which happens to have a five-card club suit. No need to get involved.

It is possible that 2♣ won't get hurt. If you bid it, though, your partner will be entitled to play you for a bigger hand. If he has a 7-point hand he will try for game. If you overbid like this a few times your partner won't trust you. Then, when you have a really good hand, your partner will be afraid to bid. Bid aggressively, but stay within your required values.

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

1♥	pass	1♦	dbl
----	------	----	-----

♠ A Q J 3 ♥ K 10 6 4 ♦ 4 ♣ A Q 9 8

It is okay to double again for takeout. Your partner is entitled to be broke, but you have solid values with excellent shape and are permitted to hope for him to have a four-card suit to bid.

Note that your ♥K is not worthless. If West had opened 1♥, your ♥K1064 would be suspect. Here, East opened the bidding. West's 1♥ bid shows 6 or more points. There is little reason to feel that West has all the heart honors. I think the ♥K will be a trick for you more often than not. The key is not so much who bid a suit. The key is who showed the strength. East has the strong hand so your ♥K probably has worth.

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

1♥	pass	1♦	dbl
		2♦	?

♠ K Q 7 ♥ A J 7 6 ♦ K 7 ♣ Q J 8 2

Pass. Even though you have extra values, you know that your partner is weak. If you double again, the odds are good that your partner will bid spades. If he has a poor hand with four little spades, 2♠ won't be a success. If he has a poor hand with three little spades and he bids 2♦ as the least of evils, 2♦ will be a horrible contract.

REMEMBER – When you make your initial takeout double you do not need perfect shape. At that point in the bidding you can hope your partner has some values. On the second round, by which time you have learned partner doesn't have much, you need genuine takeout shape to double again. Change the ♥6 to the ♠6 and you can double again with this hand.

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

1NT	pass	1♦	dbl
		pass	?

♠ A K 8 3 ♥ A Q 9 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ Q J 2

Pass. It is remotely tempting to double. You have 4-4 in the majors, but your shape is only decent. If your shape were 4-4-1-4, doubling again would be fine. If you had the ♥J too, it would be okay to double again. As it is, passing is

probably best. Consider this. If your partner is aggressive about responding to a takeout double, you can be comfortable that your partner has a genuinely poor hand. One thing to note here is that West's 1NT bid shows (at least it should show) about 8 to 10 points. West's bid has some teeth to it.

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

♠ K Q 8 2 ♥ K J 10 5 ♦ 3 ♣ A J 8 5

Double. When the opponents bid and raise a suit, they are in a contract they like. If they like their contract you don't want to let them enjoy it. Against this, your partner also knows that letting them play in a fit sequence is bad. If he could have bid something, he would have.

I would take the risk and double again. You have a bit more than a minimum double, but you also have perfect shape. Even if partner has a real dog, the shape may allow you to survive. Barring partner having to bid a three-card suit, you will end up in at least an eight-card fit.

An aside. If you play responsive doubles, there is a small chance that partner wants to defend against 2♦ doubled. If so, he will pass when you double 2♦.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
2♦	pass	3♦	?

♠ A J 8 2 ♥ K J 10 5 ♦ 8 ♣ A Q 8 5

Double. The majority of players play that opener's 3♦ bid on this sequence is weak. The idea is to keep the opponents from getting together at the last moment. Opener might bid 3♦ with a hand like this:

♠ 7 5 ♥ A 8 7 4 ♦ K Q 7 6 2 ♣ K 3

Opener can see that the opponents have a spade fit, and bids 3♦ to keep them from finding it. This is a good tactic that you should be using.

If your opponents bid this way, curiously, it does not mean you should react by bidding your head off. If you have a normal takeout double with nothing extra you shouldn't bid again. Even if they are bidding weakly, you know your partner had a chance and didn't take it.

The hand here is good enough to double 3♦. The key is knowing what opener's 3♦ bid means. If it is preemptive, as here, you can be aggressive. If it

is invitational, you should be more cautious. In either case, always remember that your partner didn't bid over 2♦.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO PASSES

YOUR PARTNER MAKES A SIMPLE RESPONSE, RHO PASSES

What does a raise by you show?

When you double and partner bids something like one of a suit, you know that he is denying a fair hand. He may have 8 bad points. He may have 3 points. He could have 0 points. When he bids a suit you are allowed to pass. When you do bid, it means you have something extra.

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

♠ K 9 7 3 ♥ A Q 8 ♦ 8 3 ♣ K J 7 3

Pass. Unless you have a big hand, you will pass when partner bids a suit. You might raise partner but this is usually the only thing you can do. On this hand, you pass. Raising partner's suit promises *four-card support* and some extra values. (In the next chapter I will show how you can bid when you have three-card support and a very good hand.)

What often happens is something like this.

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

♠ K 7 5 4 ♥ K J 5 ♦ A 3 ♣ Q 8 7 5

South, tickled pink that North has bid spades, raises to 2♠. This is called overbidding.

Here are some of the consequences of South's overbid.

- Case one. North has 7 or 8 decent points. North should bid again but doesn't. Between South's overbid and North's underbid, a good 2♠ contract is bid and made.

- Case two. North has 7 or 8 decent points and correctly makes a game try. Too bad. South's overbid pushes his side too high and they go down.
- Case three. North has no points and goes down in 2♠. Sometimes this is doubled and 2♠ goes down big time.
- Case four. South finally has a real 17-point hand and raises to 2♠. North has 7 or 8 points and remembers what happened to him the last time this auction came up. North passes and makes eleven tricks.

Expert secret – The art of not overbidding

Experienced players have learned that a little overbidding in this situation is a good idea. They know that a lot of overbidding is not. How much is right? I think that if you have four-card support, it is okay to raise to the two-level with a point or two less than the traditional requirements. Here are some important examples.

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

♠ A 7 6 3 ♥ K Q 8 2 ♦ Q 3 ♣ K 7 6

Pass. Be honest when you count your points. This hand has 15 points if you count everything, but that is optimistic. The ♦Q is not worth full value. In addition, you have no spot cards. This hand is worth closer to 13 points.

♠ A 10 9 3 ♥ K J 10 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A Q 5

Bid 2♥. This hand has only 14 HCP but they are all good ones. In addition it has excellent spot cards. Tens and nines do not get the recognition they deserve. Point count awards them zero value, which does them a great disservice. Taking the tens and nines into consideration along with the quality of the high-card points and the doubleton in diamonds, this hand evaluates to a pushy 16 points. With all the high cards working, you are entitled to nudge a little and raise to 2♥. When you are making close decisions, you want all of your values to be working. You don't want doubtful high cards. Note this reminder: your raise promises four trumps.

♠ A 10 8 7 ♥ A Q J 8 ♦ 3 ♣ Q 10 8 7

The shape, the great trumps, and the fine spot cards make this a good raise to 2♥.

♠ Q 7 6 ♥ A K Q 10 ♦ J 6 3 ♣ K 9 8

This is a well-judged pass. Don't fall in love with your hundred honors in hearts. The rest of the hand is poor. It was worth a takeout double, but without interest from North it isn't going anywhere. Don't forget to deduct a point for having 4-3-3-3 shape.

What does a jump raise by you show?

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

♠ A K J 3 ♥ Q 10 8 3 ♦ 4 2 ♣ A K 4

Bid 3♥. You must not get carried away with hands like this one. Your partner's range is 0 to 8. He does not promise 6 points, which would be the case if you had opened and your partner responded. You have 18 support points, which is about right. Your partner will bid game on any decent 6 count. A rough rule of thumb is that if you have two points more than a normal raise to 3♥, you can make a jump raise when partner is responding to a takeout double.

What does a jump to game by you show?

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

♠ K J 3 ♥ A J 9 5 ♦ A 8 ♣ A K 9 7

Bid 4♥. Even with a hand this big, you won't make game if your partner is broke. But since you can't cater to that you bid 4♥, hoping your partner has a little something. If he has five little hearts and one of the black queens, you may make 4♥. The big deal when you are thinking of raising partner is to recognize that your partner may have a terrible hand.

♠ A 10 4 ♥ A K J 4 ♦ 8 ♣ K Q 10 7 5

You can bid 4♥ with this. In support of hearts you have 20 support points but you have such good quality values that you can take a little risk. If partner has five small hearts and a doubleton spade, making 4♥ is possible. Under no circumstances should you do more. Your partner bid just 1♥. He does not have much.

What does a new suit by you show?

I talked about this in the first chapter so what appears here is somewhat of a review. Still, it is an important review since this area of bidding is often abused.

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

♠ A Q J ♥ A 4 ♦ 8 4 3 ♣ A K J 10 5

Bid 2♣. When you double and then bid a suit, you really do need a good hand. This hand is ordinary for this sequence. Imagine an auction where LHO raises to 2♦ and RHO continues to 3♦. You would not like that. When you can see that likely bidding from your opponents will be hard for you to handle, consider overcalling instead of doubling. This hand is worth a double but you shouldn't feel like you are king of the table.

♠ A Q 10 7 4 ♥ K 10 ♦ 8 3 ♣ A K Q 5

When you own the spade suit you are partially safe from annoying opponents jacking the bidding up. You can double with this hand, intending to bid spades later.

♠ A K J 7 4 ♥ A 10 ♦ 8 3 ♣ A K Q J

When your hand is really good, life is not so easy. If you double and partner bids 1♥, you have too good a hand to bid 1♠. Here is a guideline that will help you on occasion.

When you double and then bid a suit, how can you distinguish between a very good hand, a great hand, and a monster hand?

When you have a huge hand and a suit of your own, you need to tell partner just how good your hand is.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	pass	?

♠ A K J 10 5 ♥ A Q ♦ 8 3 ♣ A 10 8 5

Bid 1♠. You show a good hand. 1♠ is not forcing.

♠ A K Q 10 5 ♥ K Q 2 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ 8 5

Bid 2♦. Your jump is very strong but partner can pass with nothing.

♠ A K Q ♥ Q 7 ♦ A K Q J 8 7 ♣ 9 5

Bid 3♦. Same principle. You have a really good hand but not enough to force to game.

♠ A K Q 9 8 ♥ K Q 2 ♦ A K Q ♣ 10 6

Bid 2♣. Partner will not know for sure what you are doing. He is probably broke but he will bid something. Say he bids 2♥. Now you bid 2♦. When you double, then cuebid, and finally bid a suit, it is forcing to game. The distinction between good hands, really good hands, and monster hands is important.

Don't worry. These sequences are rare.

PARTNER JUMPS IN A NEW SUIT, RHO PASSES

Partner is showing an invitational hand when he jumps. His bid is not forcing so if you have a minimum you can pass. If you have extras you can bid again.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	2♥	pass	?

♠ Q J 9 8 ♥ K J 3 ♦ 8 3 ♣ A J 5 3

Pass. You have a minimum double and you have just three-card support. You can pass, and you do.

♠ A K 5 3 ♥ Q 5 3 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ K J 3

Pass. This hand is an improvement. You have four trumps now and slightly better high cards. Your partner's maximum is around 11 support points and you have about 14 support points of your own. This is close but passing rates to be right. Note that you have lousy spot cards. If you had a few tens and nines, you could consider bidding.

♠ A J 9 ♥ Q J 8 2 ♦ 9 3 ♣ A Q 7 3

This is a nice raise to 3♥.

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

		1♦	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠J 10 7 4 ♥ A Q 7 ♦ 5 ♣ A Q 8 7 4

Bid 4♠. This hand has 13 HCP but it is worth a lot more. You have four trumps, always a major consideration. You have a singleton diamond, not a doubleton. You have the ace-queen of both clubs and hearts. If partner has the king of either suit, you have sure tricks. If he does not have one or both of these kings your RHO rates to have them, so your partner will take winning finesses if necessary.

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

		1♦	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠J 8 4 ♥ A 10 7 ♦ K 10 3 ♣ K Q 10 5

I am not sure this is a takeout double for everyone. I would describe it as optional. Having doubled, you have learned that partner has up to 11 support points, which may only include 7 or so HCP. This is a pass. Importantly, do not think of bidding notrump.

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

		1♠	dbl
pass	3♦	pass	?

♠ 7 3 ♥ A 7 5 ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ A Q 8 7

Bid 3♠. If your partner can bid notrump he will, and you will probably be in a good contract. If he cannot bid 3NT he will do something else, such as rebid diamonds. You should be allowed to pass 4♦ but you do not have to. Bidding game is reasonable.

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

		1♦	dbl
pass	3♣	pass	?

♠ K Q J 4 ♥ Q J 8 5 ♦ 7 6 4 ♣ A 7

Pass. Your double was fine but it didn't pan out the way you wanted. Best is to pass and hope partner can make 3♣.

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

		1♠	dbl
pass	3♥	pass	?

♠7 ♥A Q 8 4 ♦A Q 3 ♣K Q J 10 4

Wow. Partner just made a magic bid for you. Ask for aces. If partner has two keycards, bid slam. If he shows one keycard, you should stop in 5♥. You might make six anyway if he has the ♣A and if he can draw trumps with a finesse.

Your partner jumps in a new suit. How do you continue with good hands?

This section shows how you might continue with some of your good hands. Some of your bids are easy. Some are more difficult. How should you continue with the following good hands after doubling and hearing partner make an invitational jump response?

One – You continue by bidding a new suit

West	North	East	South
-------------	--------------	-------------	--------------

		1♥	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠K Q 10 ♥4 ♦A Q 10 8 6 ♣K J 6 4

Bid 3♦. When North jumps, a new suit bid by you doesn't show an 18-point hand anymore but it is forcing to game. Most likely, you have a hand that isn't sure which game to play in. 3♦ keeps spades, diamonds and even notrump in play. If there is a 'best' game, you will find it. If there is no game, that is called bad luck and you don't have to feel guilty. At least you had the values for it.

♠Q 7 3 ♥3 ♦A K Q 5 3 ♣Q 7 6 3

Pass. While 3♦ doesn't show 18 points, it does show something extra. This hand has a good diamond suit and that is the end of its extras. Pass 2♠. By the way, this hand really is a better double than a 2♦ bid.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

♦ K 10 7 ♥ 4 ♦ A Q 3 ♣ A K Q 8 7 4

This is a rare hand where you doubled intending to bid your clubs later. When partner bids 2♠, you know you are in slam territory. Bid 3♣. Your partner won't know you have this hand but he will know you have extra values and will look for the best game. Perhaps you will find a slam. The big issue here is knowing for sure that 3♣ is forcing to game.

Two – You make a cuebid that shows some kind of good hand

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

♦ A Q 8 ♥ 7 3 ♦ A Q J 8 ♣ K 10 4 3

Bid 3♥. This is a prime 16-point hand. It has only three spades, but they are good ones. You have a source of tricks. I like 3♥. It may get you to 3NT. If not, you can still get to 4♠. You could raise to 4♠, but I don't care for this with just three trumps. It is worth exploring for 3NT first. Note that partner does not know your intentions yet.

Here is a hand on which your partner might jump to 2♣:

♦ J 7 3 2 ♥ A 9 4 2 ♦ 10 9 7 ♣ A 8

This hand has only four spades but it has the values to jump to 2♣. If you make a habit of raising 2♣ to 3♣ or 4♣ with three trumps, it will work poorly. Mind you, 3NT does not have to make. It will go down some of the time. The idea is that you avoided a 4-3 spade fit in the search for a game that has some chances. There might be an exceptional hand where you raise partner's jump with just three trumps but you must be careful about it. The next hand is an example of a possible exception.

♦ A K 10 ♥ 7 ♦ 10 8 6 5 3 ♣ A K 9 5

Rarely, you might have to violate the rule that requires four-card support to raise. Bid 3♣. This is a fine hand that is one tiny spade away from going to game. Looking for notrump with a 3♥ bid feels wrong and bidding 3♦ on this

poor a suit also doesn't appeal. With the understanding that raising to 3♠ with three trumps is a bad thing, I admit that the ♠AK10 is pretty good, as is the rest of the hand.

Three – You try for slam by either making a cuebid or making a splinter raise

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ Q J 7 ♦ 3 ♣ A K Q J 8

Bid 4♦. One of my favorite conventions is the splinter bid. Because 4♦ is a jump in the opponent's suit, it shows singleton, four-card support, guaranteed game values, and suggests partner think about a slam. Here, slam is cold if North has five spades to the king and the ♥A. But it isn't immediately biddable. There might be two heart losers. By bidding 4♦, South shows slam interest and encourages North to do something if he can. If North has the hand South is hoping for, he will cuebid the ♥A (or king) and South can bid Blackwood.

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♣	dbl
pass	2♥	pass	?

♠ A K Q 10 9 ♥ K Q 7 4 ♦ 9 4 ♣ A 7

Bid 3♣. Your intent is to cuebid clubs on the way to raising hearts. The auction does not always go the way you want it to but at least if you get the message across, you may reach a slam. If partner bids 3NT, you will bid 4♥. Partner will understand you have a huge hand with a club control. The cuebid here is ambiguous since partner's first thought will be that you are looking for notrump. This is a difficult area.

Four – If you have a good hand, 3NT may be the answer

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
pass	3♦	pass	?

Jumps to three of a minor strongly suggest a five- or six-card suit whereas a jump in a major commonly shows just four. Because your partner is bidding

a minor, the most likely game contract for your side will be 3NT. The takeout doubler will often look for 3NT.

♠ 10 7 3 2 ♥ K 2 ♦ K J 9 ♣ A K J 7

Bid 3NT. You hope for five diamonds, two clubs, a heart after the opening lead, and another trick to come from somewhere. Perhaps partner has the ♣Q. Perhaps he has a little help in hearts.

Note that you don't worry about the spade suit. It may be dangerous, but you can't cater your bidding to finding out whether partner can stop it. Note also that you don't bid 3♥. That would be interpreted as asking for a heart stopper. You have a stopper. Don't ask questions to which you already have the answer.

In general, you should follow Bob Hamman's rule. "If there are a number of possible bids and 3NT is one of them, then 3NT is the right bid." Since he is the leading player in the world, I don't mind sharing his advice.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
pass	3♣	pass	?

♠ J 8 4 ♥ A 8 4 ♦ A K Q 3 ♣ K Q 2

Bid 3NT. It is very unlikely that you can make a slam and 3NT looks to be safe. You do not bid 3♥ because you won't like it if partner bids 4♣, which he will do if he doesn't have a heart stopper.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
pass	3♥	pass	?

♠ 10 5 ♥ A J 4 ♦ K Q 5 3 ♣ K Q 5 3

3♥ is invitational. The big problem is that you do not know if he has four or five hearts. If he jumps to three of a minor you expect him to have five cards, but not when he jumps to 3♥. I would bid something because I have extra values. My choice is 3♠, tentatively looking for 3NT. If partner has five hearts he will tend to bid 4♥, but he will know that 3NT is a possible bid and he will consider it when he has the right hand for it.

PARTNER MAKES A DOUBLE JUMP IN A NEW SUIT, RHO PASSES

The only thing you need to do here is to recall what partner's double jump shows.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	3♥	pass	?

♠ K 7 5 4 ♥ K 10 6 4 ♦ K 10 ♣ K 8 4

The real question here is what you think your partner has. I made a suggestion about this unusual sequence earlier. Your partner should have about 7 HCP with five or six hearts and really good shape. Partner's jump is invitational. Here is a possible hand for partner:

♠ Q 10 8 ♥ Q J 7 5 3 2 ♦ 3 ♣ Q 9 7

It will be hard to make even nine tricks, let alone ten. The important thing is to have an agreement about North's 3♥ bid. If you agree on the meaning of 3♥, you will discover that the bid does come up. All that is needed is for you to be aware of it. ([See page 98.](#))

PARTNER MAKES A CUEBID

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	2♦	pass	?

♠ A Q 8 5 ♥ 10 9 8 4 ♦ 3 ♣ A K 10 8

Bid 2♦. Partner's cuebid says he will bid again. If he has four hearts, he will raise you to 3♥ or to 4♥. If he raises to 3♥ you actually have enough to bid game. You know he has four hearts for his raise so you are not worried about the trump suit.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	2♦	pass	2♥
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠J 7 4 3 ♥ A J 7 3 ♦ 9 8 ♣ K Q J

The important thing about this auction is that when partner makes a cuebid and then bids a new suit, it is forcing to game. He may have only four spades but you have four yourself. Given you must bid to game, you can choose from 3♠ and 4♣. My idea is that a 3♠ bid shows more than a 4♣ bid. If you agree with this, your bid here is 4♣.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠K 9 ♥ K 8 4 ♦ A K 9 7 ♣ Q 9 7 4

Partner's cuebid shows a good hand, very possibly looking for hearts. You do not have a major to show, but you do have a spade stopper. Bid 2NT, which is forcing to game. If partner bids 3♥ now, you can raise to 4♥ since your 2NT bid denied having four hearts. ♥K84 is good enough. If he bids a minor, you should be happy since five or six of that minor might be best.

PARTNER BIDS 1NT

Your partner's bid is hard to define. If you recall this auction from an earlier discussion you will remember that your partner's range is all over the place.

- If you double 1♣ and he bids 1NT, he shows in the range of 8 to 11 points.
- If you double 1♦ and he bids 1NT, he shows in the range of 7 to 11 points.
- If you double 1♥ and he bids 1NT, he shows in the range of 6 to 11 points.
- If you double 1♠ and he bids 1NT, he shows in the range of 5 to 11 points but in practice he may have less when he has a wretched hand without a four-card suit to bid.

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

The first step is remembering what partner is showing. If the opening bid was 1♣, a 1NT response does show decent values. North can have from 8 to 11 points.

Remember this principle. The higher-ranking their suit, the larger the range of points your partner can have for a 1NT bid. If you double 1♣ and North bids 1NT, his lower range can be as bad as 3 or 4 points.

♠ Q 9 3 2 ♥ Q J 3 ♦ A K J 6 ♣ K 3

Bid 2NT. You can raise with this in safety. When you double 1♣ your partner promises some real values when he bids 1NT. If he has 9 or more, he will bid game.

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

♠ 8 3 ♥ A Q 7 2 ♦ Q J 7 ♣ A J 7 4

Pass. Partner's maximum is a bad 11 points so game isn't making. His normal minimum is 4, in which case 1NT is high enough. Bidding against 1♣ creates some problems. This hand shows one of them.

♠ K 2 ♥ A Q 7 2 ♦ Q 8 7 ♣ A J 6 5

This is the one that hurts. North's range is so huge that you don't have a clear bid. North could have a terrible 4 points like this:

♠ Q 9 8 5 ♥ 10 8 4 ♦ 9 6 4 ♣ Q 8 2

If this is his hand you want to play in 1NT. If North has 9 or more points, you wouldn't mind being in game. One consideration is that when the opening bid is one of a major, you know they will have a long suit to lead. My guess would be to pass. Not an easy decision.

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

♠ A 8 2 ♥ 7 ♦ Q J 9 4 ♣ A Q 10 7 4

Bid 2♦. The following discussion shows why.

When your partner bids 1NT, it makes sense to play that bidding two of a *minor* is just looking for a better contract. Your 2♣ bid just says you prefer clubs to 1NT. If your partner hates clubs, it is likely he can bid 2♦. But you can't look for a better partscore if 2♣ promises a big hand. The reason you can do this after partner bids 1NT is that you know something of his shape as well as his strength. On this hand, if your partner had responded with 1♠, a 2♣ bid by you would still show a big hand.

Do not do this when your suit is a major. If you bid a major after 1NT, it shows a big hand.

PARTNER MAKES A SIMPLE RESPONSE. RHO BIDS SOMETHING

What do you need to raise?

Here is a layout that shows why you should be aggressive to raise your partner when he bids a suit and opener bids something. I will show you shortly why this example is so important.

♠ K 3 2			
♥ K 7 4 3			
♦ 10 6 5 3			
♣ 6 4			
♠ J 10 9			
♥ 10 9 6 5			
♦ K 9			
♣ 10 9 3 2			
	N		♠ 8 6 5
	W	E	♥ A
	S		♦ A Q J 7 4
			♣ K Q 8 5
♠ A Q 7 4			
♥ Q J 8 2			
♦ 8 2			
♣ A J 7			

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	1♥	2♣	?

Looking at all four hands, you can see that 2♣ is a good contract for East-West and 2♥ is a good contract for North-South.

The question is this. At the point where East bids 2♣, who should bid 2♥ for North-South?

South has a normal double with the main redemption being that it has four good trumps.

North has a modest hand but it has a spotless four-card heart suit.

In auctions like this one, the takeout doubler should be willing to overbid a little when he has a sound double that includes four-card support for partner's suit. The idea is that by raising, you take pressure off your partner, who may have a few points but not have a nice enough suit to keep bidding.

Do not do this when you have only three-card support. Having eight trumps to play with makes life much easier than when you have just seven. Even four-card support is not always enough.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	1♥	2♣	?

♠ Q 7 6 ♥ A K Q 10 ♦ J 6 3 ♣ K 9 8

You saw this hand earlier. I suggested you pass when partner responds 1♥ to your double. Here, East bids again. I still suggest you pass. In competition you can overbid some to show partner you have a good fit, but this hand is so lacking that you should pass. In fact, I don't expect many to pass with this hand, but I do recommend it. The trumps are fine, the high cards okay, but the shape couldn't be worse.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	1♠	2♦	?

♠ A Q 7 ♥ Q J 7 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ A K Q 7

Do you feel the urge to do something? The only thing you can do is raise spades but you have just three of them. I will discuss this situation in detail shortly.

YOU DOUBLE AND LHO REDOUBLES

YOUR PARTNER PASSES

When you hear LHO redouble after your takeout double, your side is likely to be in trouble. Partner's bids over that redouble do not mean much other than being a suggestion. If he passes, that is not entirely an expression of weakness. It has implications of its own.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
redbl	pass	pass	?

This is a sequence that needs partnership agreements.

The first thing for South to know is that North is not making a penalty pass. The second thing for South to know is that North did not bid himself. He does not have a suit he wishes to show.

North is saying that he wants South to find a home.

♠ J 10 7 3 ♥ Q J 4 ♦ 3 2 ♣ A K J 7

Bid 1♠. If someone doubles you, you should pass. North knows you only have four spades since you didn't overcall. North won't pass 1♠ doubled without three of them.

♠ Q J 7 ♥ Q J 7 3 ♦ 9 ♣ A Q 9 7 4

Bid 1♥. Even though you have five good clubs, bidding 1♥ is better. If nothing else, you are staying at the one-level. Also, you are leaving the opponents room to bid something and save you.

If the opponents double 1♥, what do you think a redouble by North would mean? Is he saying he loves hearts, or is there something else?

Partner is definitely saying something else. This is according to the guidelines I suggested earlier.

REMEMBER THIS RULE

When you double and they redouble, your side is concerned only with getting out alive. A redouble during an escape auction is always SOS. It is not saying that you are happy with the contract.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
redbl	pass	pass	1♥
dbl	redbl	pass	?

♠ Q J 7 ♥ Q J 7 3 ♦ 9 ♣ K Q J 7 4

Bid 2♣. North is asking you to choose between the two remaining suits. He probably has four spades and four clubs. He won't have four spades and three clubs. With that, he would bid spades himself. He might even have three spades and four clubs. Whatever he has, he hates hearts. Run to 2♣. The important

thing is that you don't interpret North's redouble to say he likes hearts. It would be an expensive lesson.

YOUR PARTNER BIDS SOMETHING

This innocent situation is the start of a lot of bad results. Many players, after making a takeout double and getting a response from partner, automatically take the rosy view that partner has something.

As you saw earlier, responding to a takeout double is not the same as responding to an opening bid. A simple response to an opening bid promises about 6 HCP and may turn out to be as high as 20. A simple response to a takeout double promises 0 HCP and is limited to about 8. Do not confuse the two situations.

If you make a takeout double and the player on your left bids something and your partner bids something too, he is making a free bid and he promises something. It may not be much, but it is something.

If you make a takeout double and the player on your left redoubles, you have learned that your partner is probably broke. Even if he bids something, you should be aware that he is not bidding from happiness. He is bidding in search of the safest contract available. Safe is relative in this context. Your safest contract might be one that gets doubled and goes down only two tricks.

If your partner bids over your LHO's redouble you should be very careful about bidding anything. With this said, how much restraint is needed?

A lot. Here are some examples where you double and LHO redoubles and your partner makes a bid. Perhaps I should call his bid a noise. Tentatively, he is not announcing points. He is admitting that whatever suit he just bid is his long suit. It might only be four cards and it is likely that they are four poor cards. A few examples:

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
redbl	1♠	pass	pass
1NT	pass	pass	?

♦ A K 8 ♥ 8 7 ♦ K J 7 3 ♣ A J 8 4

Should you bid with this hand? Here are some questions that will help you decide.

- How many points does 1♠ show?
- How many spades does 1♠ show?

The answers are:

- North could have 0 points.
- North promises only four spades.

But it is a promise he might have to break. I can imagine his bidding spades with just three if he had a horrible hand with no four-card suit to bid.

The answer is that you should pass it out in 1NT. This is a nice hand but it is not so nice that you should bid. The auction tells you that your partner has nothing. His 1♠ bid was just a noise in search of silence. He is quite likely to have four little spades and his hope was that the opponents would bid something and that would end it. If you get busy with your 16 points you will find that they do not stretch very far. Learning when to get out of harm's way is a good quality.

In case you are not convinced, here is the complete hand. At the table, this player did not find a pass. He bid 2♠ and it was doubled. Let me show you how it all worked out. I put your hand in the North seat so you can experience what your partner in the South seat is feeling.

♠ A K 8		
♥ 8 7		
♦ K J 7 3		
♣ A J 8 4		
♠ J 7		
♥ A Q 9 5 2		
♦ A 8 4		
♣ Q 10 9		
	N	
	W	E
	S	
♠ Q 10 9 2		
♥ K 10		
♦ Q 9 6 5		
♣ K 3 2		
♠ 6 5 4 3		
♥ J 6 4 3		
♦ 10 2		
♣ 7 6 5		

The final contract was 2♠ doubled by South. West correctly led a trump. This lead meant that declarer had to lose two spade tricks, four hearts, two clubs and a diamond. Down four. Even if declarer goes down just two, quite impossible, it would be a bad result.

East-West have 23 HCP and they were going to play in 1NT. You should notice that even 1♠ was going to be a disaster if it had been doubled. Doubling one-bids is not done as often as it should be. If South bids 1♠, it is likely that the opponents will bid something and South will escape. If, however, North raises to 2♠ the doubling is likely to start. Curtains!

Constructive bidding does not exist after the redouble. Your side has one goal and that is to find your best suit. The way to find your best suit is not by passing. You show your best suit by bidding it.

One last thought on this bidding. If partner had not bid 1♠, you would have ended in 2♣ doubled or worse. The 1♠ bid was necessary. Some more examples:

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
redbl	1♠	pass	?

♠ Q J 8 2 ♥ 4 ♦ A Q J 8 3 ♣ A 10 4

Bidding 2♠ is okay since you have four trumps, good shape, and good values. You do not expect to get anywhere but you do expect that your 2♠ bid may hinder their bidding.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
redbl	1♥	pass	?

♠ K 7 3 2 ♥ K Q 8 ♦ K J 7 5 ♣ 3 2

Pass. You may already be in trouble. But you can hope. Your partner could have five hearts to the jack, in which case 1♥ is as good as it gets for your side. Right now you would be happy to escape and passing 1♥ gives you the best chance at doing that.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
redbl	1NT	dbl	?

♠ K Q ♥ Q 8 7 4 ♦ K Q 8 2 ♣ A 8 3

Pass. But don't expect partner to play it here. If you think about the bidding, the chance that your partner has some points is zero. The bidding is still young. You can predict that your partner will do something to escape from 1NT doubled. If North redoubles 1NT, you will run to 2♦. This sequence is one of the ways partner can ask you to choose a minor suit. If the following are the combined hands, it is important to get to a diamond contract.

♠ 8 6 3 2
♥ 9
♦ 10 9 7 5
♣ J 5 4 2

♠ K Q
♥ Q 8 7 4
♦ K Q 8 2
♣ A 8 3

Diamonds is your best fit. Had partner guessed earlier to bid 2♣, he would now have to guess what to do when someone doubled it. Much better to reach your eight-card fit with certainty.

REMEMBER THIS IMPORTANT RULE

After they redouble your takeout double, all bids by you, including redoubles, are geared to looking for a good home. Actually, what you are doing is hunting for your least-bad home.

YOUR PARTNER MAKES AN IMPOSSIBLE BID

This situation can really come up. I mention it here so that if you are in this situation you will know what it means.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
re dbl	2♣		

North's bid seems impossible. What can it mean?

You have to sort out the possibilities. Here is one that makes sense. It is known that your partner has a bad hand. I suggest this.

If North bids 2♣, a cuebid, he is showing a weak hand with both majors and enough distribution that he is safe in getting to the two-level. Here are examples of this thought.

♠ Q 7 3 2 ♥ 10 9 6 5 3 ♦ 7 5 3 ♣ 3

With this distribution, you should be happy to play in two of a major. You have enough shape to be safe and you get some nice perks too. You make it harder for them to bid and you bring partner into the game if he has a little extra shape himself.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
re dbl	2NT		

This is a rare bid which will surely get you into print if it is successful. This can be treated as unusual, showing the two lower unbid suits. Since you are pushing the bidding to the three-level you need better shape than normal. An example hand:

♠ 2 ♥ 10 9 6 5 3 ♦ J 10 9 6 3 ♣ 9 3

You know from partner's double that you have a fit. Hopefully, you have a nine-card fit. By bidding 2NT you tell partner you have the two lower unbid suits. You probably can't make much but you can make enough that they won't get rich doubling you. And by taking up two rounds of bidding, you force them to work harder than if you had passed or bid 1♥ or perhaps 2♥.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO BIDS, AND PARTNER DOES SOMETHING

This is the start of many bidding free-for-alls. When you double and partner can volunteer a free bid, it generally means the points are evenly divided. If both sides find a fit early in the auction the bidding will turn into a war of nerves; each side bidding just one more and daring the opponents to do something about it.

This is not surprising. If both sides have 20 HCP and if all four players have two or three distributional points, there can be more than 50 points at the table. If both sides have 25 points (counting distribution), then both sides may have a makeable game available. No wonder there is a lot of bidding!

There are too many sequences to cover them all, so the examples will focus on the more common and important of those you will encounter. As you see more and more of these auctions you will note that the most exciting decisions come when your LHO raises opener.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO BIDS A NEW SUIT, AND YOUR PARTNER BIDS A NEW SUIT

Right away you can tell that the points are relatively even between the two sides. You may have some games but mostly you will be arguing over partscores.

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	1♣	dbl
		pass	?

Since you made a takeout double showing, among other things, spades, it is a certainty that you will have something in spades. The most common problem is whether to raise.

♠J 7 6 ♥A Q J 5 ♦J 8 7 4 ♣A Q

Pass. 1NT, even after partner shows some cards, still shows a big hand. You need another couple of points to bid 1NT.

♠K Q 7 ♥9 8 3 2 ♦A K 10 3 ♣K 2

Pass. You have a good hand. North will be happy to see it. He will be happier to see it in a 1♠ contract than in a higher contract. Think about what North shows. He can have as few as 4 HCP with five spades and as much as 8 HCP and four spades. Neither of these is enough to make a game a big deal. Hands like this show why it is important for North to bid the full value of his hand. If North is likely to have 10 points, then your decision to pass will look silly. North must bid accurately. He should not bid 1♠ with 10 good points and claim he made a 'free' bid.

♠8 6 5 3 ♥A Q 7 ♦A Q 10 8 ♣7 2

Pass. Don't raise just because you have four spades. Raise when you have something extra. You don't need the traditional 16 or more for the raise, but you do need more than a minimum. If East had bid 2♣ or 2♥, you could bid 2♠.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♥	1♠	1NT	?

If you have four spades and shape, you can raise. What you do not want to do is be intimidated into passing. There won't be much else you can do on this sequence. If you happen to have the 18-point hand you can double, and if you have a big hand with a suit, you can double or bid. Most likely, you will either pass or raise partner's suit.

♠J 8 7 3 ♥K Q 7 4 ♦A J 10 2 ♣3

Bid 2♠. In competition, you can raise with your shapely hands. You have the required four trumps and you have good shape. Note that North isn't going to take your raise seriously. Opener's notrump rebid is a warning that he has something in spades and he also is showing that his opening bid is based on high cards and not shape. If you raise to 2♠, you will be safe at the three-level if partner persists.

Note that many of your competitive raises are not aimed at getting to game. You are hoping to push the opponents higher or help partner in case he wishes

to compete further. I truly do not remember the last time my partner leapt to game after bidding 1♠ and getting a competitive raise from me.

♠ Q 7 4 ♥ K J 7 2 ♦ A Q 8 2 ♣ K 3

Pass. Definitely. Remember what partner can have for his 1♠ bid. He may have as little as:

♠ K 9 8 3 ♥ 9 3 ♦ J 10 7 ♣ J 8 4 2

Opposite your 15-point hand, 1♠ is a good spot and 2♠ isn't. *If you had a fourth trump, the worth of the combined hands would be almost two tricks more.*

IMPORTANT

In competitive auctions, the person holding the eighth trump is usually the one who does the competing. If the takeout doubler has four trumps, he can push on. If the responder to the takeout double has a five-card suit, he can push on. The eighth trump may be the single most crucial key to low-level competitive decisions.

♠ A 8 3 ♥ A K 3 ♦ K Q J 10 ♣ 8 7 4

Double. Risky but worthwhile. You have six sure tricks. Your partner is likely to have at least one. If North has a fifth spade and a weak hand, he can and should pull to 2♣. He should not have four spades and a really weak hand. If he had that, he wouldn't have bid 1♠.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♥	2♦	pass	?

When North bids a minor suit he tends to show a slightly better hand than when he bids a major suit. You may end up having a game in notrump after this start, although it will be rare.

♠ A 9 2 ♥ A K 7 3 ♦ K Q 10 3 ♣ 8 3

You can raise to 3♦, but you have a better bid available. Bid 3♣, more or less asking if North has a club stopper for notrump. Note that you started with a takeout double. North won't worry about bidding notrump with one or two little hearts. He will trust that you have that suit stopped.

♠ 10 7 6 3 ♥ A 7 5 2 ♦ A K J ♣ K J

Bid 2NT. This is forward going. You show about an opening 1NT bid or some equivalent that has a source of tricks. This hand happens to have both. Bidding 3NT is excessive. Partner bid only 2♦. Give him room for enterprise. If you bid 3NT and go down, North may stop making competitive bids when he should. That is the last thing you wish him to do.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO BIDS A NEW SUIT, AND YOUR PARTNER JUMPS IN A SUIT

Since your partner could have made a simple free bid, a jump by him shows a solid hand within the 8 to 11 point range.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♥	2♠	pass	?

♠ Q 8 7 4 ♥ K 7 6 4 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ 5 3

Pass. You have a minimum double that didn't get any better when West bid 1♥.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♦	2♥	pass	?

♠ K 8 7 4 ♥ A J 10 9 ♦ A 8 7 4 ♣ 3

Bid 4♥. You know your partner has a good 8 to 11 points. Counting your shape and including your four good cards in hearts, bidding game is okay. Your ♠K should be a good card. If your partner does not have the ace, the ace should be in opener's hand.

What are your agreements about partner's jump to 2♥?

REMINDER – In an earlier part of this book I noted that some partnerships like to play the jump to 2♥ as weak. This is a useful tool, although few use it. If you play this way, then you absolutely must remember it. I suggest you do not use this treatment because you will have trouble showing your invitational hands.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO BIDS A NEW SUIT, AND YOUR PARTNER CUEBIDS ONE OF THEIR SUITS

You can make a mess of this area if you don't have understandings. If the bidding goes, for instance:

West	North	East	South
1♥	?	1♦	dbl

Do you know the difference between a 2♦ cuebid and a 2♥ cuebid? You have probably never thought about it and I hadn't given it much thought either until one of my more scientific partners gave me twenty pages on the differences. I can give you half of a page that will be worth more and cause fewer memory lapses.

If North cuebids opener's suit, in this case 2♦, it is a cuebid in the normal sense. North will have a hand that would have cuebid 2♦ had West passed instead of bidding 1♥.

If North cuebids responder's suit, in this case by bidding 2♥, it should be played as natural. Here is an example of what partner might have to bid 2♥.

West	North	East	South
1♥	2♥	1♦	dbl

♠ K 9 4 ♥ A 10 7 6 4 ♦ 6 5 ♣ J 8 4

North has a hand that would have jumped to 2♥ had it been possible. With his RHO bidding 1♥, things have changed. One way to show this hand is to say that a 2♥ bid is not a cuebid, but a natural bid showing a hand that would have made a jump to 2♥.

Because the 1♥ bid has shown four hearts, North's cuebid of 2♥ promises a five-card suit. This treatment is rare, but it is also handy when it comes up. Keep in mind that this bid is not forcing. Do not bid 2♥ when you really have enough for game.

Note the advantages of North's 2♥ bid. It makes it hard for opener to continue, but more importantly, it tells South what he has.

Here is an example showing why this agreement is useful.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♥	2♥	pass	?

♠ J 5 4 3 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A K Q 6

Pass. If you play as I suggest, you will know that your partner has five hearts and around 9 support points. You can pass 2♥ or you can bid, but you are not obliged to bid.

- You have a minimum double.
- You have normal but minimum heart support.
- Your partner did not look for another suit.
- You are probably in a good contract.
- If you have a better hand you can bid more.

♠ J 8 7 4 ♥ K 10 4 ♦ K 7 ♣ A K Q 6

With this hand you can bid 4♥ knowing your partnership has the points and knowing your partner has five hearts. With just a little less than this you could raise to 3♥.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO BIDS A NEW SUIT, AND YOUR PARTNER DOUBLES

As always, you need to know what partner's double means. I noted there are two possible ways to treat the double.

1. It can be takeout for the two missing suits.
2. It can be for penalty showing 8 or more points with four cards in the suit he doubled.

Here are a couple of hands showing how your bid depends on what partner's double means.

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

♠ A 8 5 ♥ J 10 7 4 ♦ J 5 ♣ A Q J 7

If partner is doubling for penalty, you should pass. Your partner has four hearts and more than 8 points so they are not making this. Most likely West will bid something and then the problems will really begin.

If partner is doubling for takeout, he is showing spades and clubs. You prefer clubs so your bid would be 2♣. You are not obliged to do this. If you had a bigger hand you could make a bigger bid.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♥	dbl	2♦	?

♠ A 8 5 ♥ J 10 7 4 ♦ J 5 ♣ A Q J 7

If partner's double of 1♥ was for penalty showing exactly four hearts and 8 or more points, you should bid 2♥. You know your partner has support and points, and now that you know where the length in hearts is you should be able to play the hand wisely.

If partner's double of 1♥ was for takeout, you should pass. You would bid 2♠ if you had four of them but you do not have enough to bid 3♣. It is likely that your partner will bid again since he is known to have a fair hand.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♠	dbl	2♣	?

♠ A 8 5 ♥ J 10 7 4 ♦ J 5 ♣ A Q J 7

If your partner's double was penalty, showing four spades and 8 or more points, you know they could be in trouble. Double 2♣. If they run back to 2♦ and your partner cannot double, give up.

If your partner's double of 1♠ is for takeout, showing hearts and clubs, you should bid 2♥. No need to double them in 2♣ when you know you have a good heart fit. You know that they will return to diamonds in any event.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO BIDS 1NT, AND YOUR PARTNER BIDS A SUIT

In this case, LHO's 1NT bid shows real values. Opener has around 13 HCP, you promise around 11 HCP, and your LHO implies 8 to 10. This leaves a maximum of 8 HCP for your partner. If anyone has an extra point it means your partner has that much less. All this serves to warn you that partner is bidding on shape, not on high-card points. He is relatively likely to have a five-card suit.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1NT	2♠	pass	?

♠ A 7 6 2 ♥ A Q 7 4 ♦ 8 4 ♣ K 10 6

Pass. The most significant thing to note here is that the 1NT bid promises genuine high-card values. LHO has 8 to 10 points. This is not too threatening, but it does mean your side won't be bidding games. Your partner won't have a good hand but he may have some distribution for his 2♦ bid. Your maximum result will be a partscore. Here is a possible hand for partner:

♠ 10 9 8 4 3 ♥ 8 6 2 ♦ A 7 6 3 ♣ 9

This is not a big hand but it has shape and a five-card suit. Your partner is welcome, in fact invited, to bid with a hand like this. You rate to make a partscore but that is the likely limit of the hand.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1NT	2♠	3♣	?

♠ K 8 5 3 ♥ K Q 7 3 ♦ K J 4 ♣ Q 7

Pass. There is no way you will make 3♣ unless North bids it himself, which is unlikely. Discounting the ♣Q, this is an ordinary takeout double.

♠ A J 10 7 ♥ A 9 8 4 ♦ K Q J 5 ♣ 4

Go ahead and bid 4♣. Just because LHO bid notrump doesn't mean you can never make a game. You have good trumps, something partner will always adore, good shape, controls, and a source of tricks. This rates to be a biddable 21 HCP game.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO RAISES, AND YOUR PARTNER BIDS A SUIT

Get ready for action. This sequence is the most volatile auction of all. Both sides have a fit. Both sides know it. Both sides are going to be aggressive.

When an opponent raises over your takeout double, it is the weakest sequence they can have short of LHO not bidding at all. When LHO bids a new suit at the one-level, he shows 5 HCP up to 20. When he bids 1NT, he shows 8

to 10. When he raises to the two-level he shows 4 and seldom has more than 6. If there was ever an auction where your side might have a game, this one is it.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
2♣	2♦	pass	?

♠ A K 3 ♥ Q 9 8 3 ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ 6 3

Pass. But be willing to push to 3♦.

♠ A 7 3 2 ♥ A K 9 8 ♦ K Q 5 ♣ 7 3

Pass. Add up the points. You have 16. RHO has 13. LHO has 5 or 6, on average. That adds up to 34 or 35 points. Your partner has nothing but a long diamond suit and little more than a prayer.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
2♣	2♠	pass	?

♠ Q 10 6 ♥ A K 6 5 ♦ A J 8 7 4 ♣ 4

Pass. This hand shows the difference in strength between having four trumps and just three. With three, you should pass. With four, you should raise to game.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
2♦	2♠	3♦	?

♠ A K 10 3 ♥ Q 8 7 ♦ 6 ♣ A J 10 7 4

Bid 4♦. Does this feel like an overbid? In a way, it is. But it is practical to do so for all of these reasons.

1. If you bid just 3♠ your partner won't know how serious you are about your hand. 3♠ would be right if East passed, but he didn't.
2. You have super trumps. This is a key when you are making overbids, which this bid is.
3. If you bid 4♦ confidently, your opponents may misjudge and save. This is a common bidding situation. The opponents are competing in their suit

and you jump to game in yours. They have to decide whether to bid on or to defend.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
2♥	2♠	3♥	?

♦ K J 5 ♥ K 3 ♦ A Q 7 4 ♣ Q 8 5 4

Pass. This is a common situation. Should you compete to the three-level or not? I think not. Why should you assume they can make 3♥? You have a heart trick, two likely diamond tricks, and potential tricks in spades and clubs.

Your chances of making 3♦ are not as good as your 15 HCP suggest. Frankly, not having a fourth spade, it is hard to imagine 3♦ would make if partner can't bid it himself. Best to pass and hope that pushing them to the three-level is good enough. In a few cases, if your partner has five fair spades and unexpected shape he may go on to 3♦ himself. On this hand it should be your partner's decision, not yours.

♦ K J 5 2 ♥ 3 ♦ A Q 7 4 ♣ Q 10 9 4

By all means, go ahead and bid three 3♦. This is the same situation as the previous hand but with two changes. You have one more spade, giving you the magic eight-card fit, and you have no ♥K, giving you one less defensive trick. Your chance of making 3♦ goes up about fifty percent and your chance of setting 3♥ goes down by about fifty percent. Trumps and shape speak.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
2♥	2♠	4♥	?

Don't let East's bidding panic you. East's 4♥ bid may be serious, but he may be kidding you. He may be hoping that you will bid 4♦. Whatever you do, make sure your decision is based on merit and not emotion.

♦ K J 7 2 ♥ Q 8 ♦ A J 9 3 ♣ Q J 3

Pass. Do not bid 4♦. You can't expect to make 4♦. If you bid it, you are doing so because you hope 4♥ will make. What do you think will happen? Do you think 4♥ is making? Consider. You have a potential spade trick. You have a sure diamond trick and may have two. Your club holding is a likely trick too. It will take a while to get your club trick, but there should be one sooner or later.

Finally, you have the queen of trumps. What is it worth on defense? Before you answer that, answer me this. Have you ever had nine trumps in your combined hands, missing just the queen, and lost a trump trick?

♥ 9 7 5 4

♥ A K J 10 6

This is the trump suit in question. What percentage of the time have you lost a trick when you misguessed the suit? It happens to me more than I like and I will doubt you if you tell me it never happens to you. Now. If you admit that you don't always get this combination right at the table, what are the chances that your opponent is going to play the heart suit correctly on this hand? I predict that if you pass 4♥, you will score your ♥Q more than thirty percent of the time. All in all, I don't expect 4♥ to be all that cold. I would pass it out.

If you do bid 4♠ on such a sequence you should either expect to make, or be sure they can make 4♥.

♠ K J 3 ♥ 9 ♦ A 10 7 3 ♣ K 8 7 6 3

Pass. You suspect they can make 4♥, but with just three trumps bidding 4♠ is silly.

♠ Q J 8 5 ♥ 8 ♦ Q J 7 2 ♣ K Q 9 2

Bid 4♠ unless you are vulnerable and they are not. You aren't going to make it, but you aren't going to beat 4♥ either. Since you expect to go down, you need to judge if you will go down too many. To answer that question, you need to check the vulnerability. If they are vulnerable and you are not, the vulnerability allows you to go down three tricks, assuming they can make their game. If the vulnerability is the same for both sides, you need to take eight tricks for down two to make it a good sacrifice.

Think along these lines. If your partner has five spades to the king and nothing else, you have a fair chance of losing only five tricks. That would be down two. This is a reasonable result to hope for. If down two rates to be a good result, then you can bid 4♠.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO RAISES, AND YOUR PARTNER MAKES A RESPONSIVE DOUBLE

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
2♦	dbl*	3♦	?

♠ A J 10 7 ♥ Q J 9 3 ♦ — ♣ K Q 10 7 3

Bid 4♦. North is showing four cards in each major and enough points to be at the two-level. This is a typical minimum hand that he might have:

♠ Q 8 4 3 ♥ A 10 8 2 ♦ J 8 2 ♣ 9 2

Game is playable for you so you should cuebid 4♦. This will tell North to bid his longest major. Usually he will have 4-4 in the majors and it won't matter which one you play in. If by some chance North has four of one and five of the other, you will end up in the longer suit.

Note that South does not consider looking for clubs. North's responsive double promises both majors. If North had only one major he would bid it, and if he had only clubs he would bid them. You can count on North having four or more cards in each major.

♠ K Q 9 6 ♥ A J 5 ♦ 3 2 ♣ A Q 10 8

Bid 3♠. You are showing you have four spades and some extra values. North can continue if he wishes. If he has a minimum of 6 or 7 points, he will pass. If he has 8 or more he will bid game.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
2♥	dbl*	pass	?

This is another example of the responsive double. On this auction, they are bidding a major. If you are using responsive doubles, North's double shows both minors. If he had spades, he would bid them. If he had one minor only, he would bid it. Double says he has both minors, no interest in spades, and 8 or more points.

♠ A K J 8 ♥ 8 7 ♦ K 4 3 ♣ Q 10 4 2

Assuming partner's double is responsive, you should bid 3♣. Do not bid spades.

West	North	East	South
		1 \heartsuit	dbl
3 \heartsuit *	dbl*	pass	?

1. Preemptive

\spadesuit A K 5 \heartsuit 8 7 4 \diamond K J 4 \clubsuit K Q 9 4

Bid 5 \clubsuit . This is an exercise in hand evaluation. You can make game if North has little as:

\spadesuit 9 7 3 \heartsuit J \diamond A Q 10 3 \clubsuit J 10 7 6 3

You may say that I have picked North's hand with care, but in fact this is a minimum responsive double. North's double forces us to the four-level, so he shouldn't have less than this. I agree that 5 \clubsuit can go down. But without stretching things too much, I can also give you a hand that may make a slam:

\spadesuit 8 7 3 \heartsuit 5 \diamond A 9 7 6 3 \clubsuit A 8 7 2

I don't claim you will make a slam opposite this dummy, but twelve tricks are possible. Note that if you did bid just 4 \clubsuit you would play it there. When you are under pressure, it is a good idea to be aggressive if you can see a reasonable chance of success. This is good, winning strategy.

West	North	East	South
		1 \heartsuit	dbl
2 \heartsuit	dbl*	pass	3 \clubsuit
pass	3 \spadesuit	pass	?

\spadesuit K J 10 8 \heartsuit 8 7 \diamond A 9 4 \clubsuit K Q 10 4

Partner doubled 2 \heartsuit showing the minors and 9 or more points. You bid your clubs and partner did a funny thing. He bid spades. This is a special auction that says he has a game-forcing hand with spades. He really was stuck here. One choice by him might have been to bid 4 \clubsuit but that gets in the way of your side's bidding. Doubling first and then bidding a suit shows enough points for game. You should raise to 4 \clubsuit .

IMPORTANT

This bidding trick only works when their side has bid to the two-level. If they have bid to the three-level, you are back to normal responsive doubles without the ambiguity of maybe having a game-forcing hand.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO BIDS SOMETHING, AND YOUR PARTNER BIDS 1NT

West	North	East	South
1♠	1NT	1♥	dbl
		pass	?

This one is easy. Partner is showing 8 to 10 points for sure and you can bid on that assumption. There is nothing special about this situation.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO PASSES, AND YOUR PARTNER MAKES A CUEBID

Cuebidding auctions were discussed earlier. Here are a couple of reminder sequences.

E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
pass	2♦	1♦	dbl
		pass	?

♠ A J 6 4 ♥ J 10 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A J 9 5 4

Bid 2♠. North is asking for a major so you show the one you have. North's cuebid is forcing for now. If North raises to 3♠ you may pass, but if he bids anything else, including 2NT, it is forcing.

♠ K Q 8 3 ♥ J 8 7 3 ♦ A J ♣ Q 10 7

Bid 2♥. After the cuebid, your side tends to bid suits up the line. If partner doesn't have heart support he will have spades and will bid them next. Do not bid notrump with this. Notrump can wait.

♠ A Q J 4 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A 9 7

Bid 2♥. You will get to game eventually so you don't have to do any jumping now. North's cuebid promises he will bid again.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠ K 6 ♥ Q J 8 3 ♦ K 10 7 3 ♣ A 6 5

Bid 3♥. If North has a hand that is interested in notrump, he will bid 3♠ next and then you will bid 3NT.

YOU DOUBLE, LHO RAISES, AND YOUR PARTNER MAKES A CUEBID

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
2♥	3♥	pass	?

♠ A Q 7 4 ♥ A 10 ♦ Q 7 4 ♣ Q 7 5 4

When they bid and raise over your double, a three-level cuebid by your partner asks if you have a stopper in their suit. You do so you bid 3NT. Partner likely has a good six- or seven-card minor. If you did not have a heart stopper, you would bid something besides 3NT. You might bid 3♣ and you might bid a minor suit.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CONTINUING WITH 18 OR MORE POINTS BUT ONLY THREE-CARD SUPPORT FOR PARTNER

Takeout double sequences are a huge part of your defensive bidding. When the bidding is not complex, these sequences will become an important part of your agreements.

Other sequences may not be as smooth. This can happen when you have a good hand which does not have an easy bid available on the second round. Some tools are needed to handle these hands.

HOW DO YOU SHOW 18 OR MORE SUPPORT POINTS WITH THREE-CARD SUPPORT?

This is a genuine issue that you need an answer to. This discussion is going to show you ideas that are useful and which do come up often enough to be on your convention card.

You double and your partner bids something. How do you handle your good hands that do not have a clear bid? You might think that a hand with 17 or more HCP would be easy to bid but it is not always so. Especially difficult are hands with three-card support for partner and 18 or more support points. This section will look at three auctions that differ in subtle ways.

CASE ONE: YOUR PARTNER RESPONDS AT THE ONE-LEVEL TO YOUR TAKEOUT DOUBLE AND OPENER PASSES

How do you show good hands with three-card support?

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	pass	?

♠ A K J 4 ♥ A J 3 ♦ K Q 5 4 ♣ 9 2

You surely want to bid something with this hand but what can you bid that makes sense?

You do not want to raise to 2♥ since that shows four-card support and around 16 support points.

You do not want to bid 1♠. You have the points you need for this sequence but you don't have a long enough suit.

You do not want to raise to 3♥ since that also promises four-card support. If your partner has four small hearts he might survive playing in 2♥, but being in 3♥ would present a tougher challenge.

Here is how you can handle the problem above.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	pass	2♣

Bid 2♣, cuebidding opener's suit. You may have a different kind of hand but at this point, your partner will expect you to have 18 support points or more with three-card support. This is a logical thing to think. It is an agreement that was developed in the last few years to cater to difficult hands like the one above. In a way, this bid is comparable to the support double. Your partner's bidding will be improved when he knows the kind of hands you have for this bid.

What kind of hands might cuebid 2♣ other than to show three-card support?

- You might have a huge hand with a suit to bid.
- You might have a monster hand that wants to get to 3NT.
- You might have a monster hand that is going to insist on getting to game.
- You might have a monster hand that wants to cuebid prior to raising partner to game.
- Just remember. Since your cuebid will show a good hand with a three-card raise around ninety percent of the time, that is what your partner will expect subject to your next bid showing otherwise.

How does your partner bid when you cuebid?

(Remember that he assumes you are showing three-card support and 18 or more points.)

Here are the rules for partner's bids after you show your big hand with three cards in hearts.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	pass	2♣

- 2♦ Partner is showing nothing of value. He is suggesting that diamonds might be a superior trump suit. South, the 2♣ bidder, can pass 2♦. A possible hand:

♠ 5 3 ♥ 10 7 5 4 ♦ J 8 7 3 ♣ J 4 3

- 2♥ He shows a bad hand with four or more hearts. He has no interest in going higher. His hand could have a queen, it could have two jacks, it might include a scroungy 3 or 4 points. He could have less. A possible hand:

♠ Q 7 3 ♥ 10 9 8 4 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ 10 6 4

- 2♠ He shows four spades with a few points. 2♠ is forcing and shows mild invitational values. He rates to have four spades and four or five hearts. A possible hand:

♠ Q 9 8 2 ♥ K 7 5 4 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ 10 6

- 2NT He has a club stop and enough points to make a positive noise. South can do many things over 2NT, including passing it. A possible hand:

♠ 9 5 ♥ 10 8 7 4 ♦ J 4 3 ♣ K J 7 3

- 3♣ 3♣, a cuebid, is forcing to game. It shows a maximum 1♥ bid with just four hearts. The continuation bids are all natural. Once your partner cuebids their suit, the bidding has to continue. A possible hand:

♠ Q 10 ♥ Q 10 6 2 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ 8 7 6 3

- 3♦ He has four or five diamonds with a few points. It is forcing to game. A possible hand:

♠ 7 2 ♥ K Q 9 5 ♦ J 10 7 6 3 ♣ 10 8

- 3♥ This is forcing, showing 6 or so points with five or six hearts. A possible hand:

♠ Q 9 2 ♥ K Q 7 5 2 ♦ J 6 3 ♣ 6 3

- 3NT Natural with a maximum 1♥ bid and good club stoppers. A possible hand:

♠ 10 7 ♥ K 8 6 5 ♦ J 4 2 ♣ Q J 10 4

4♥ Natural with six or more hearts and a maximum 1♥ bid. You want to be in game for sure. A possible hand:

♠ 9 3 2 ♥ K 10 9 8 5 2 ♦ J 10 3 ♣ 4

A possible problem

Are there any problems with these agreements?

There is one, which will be rare. If the takeout doubler has aspirations beyond getting to a heart contract, he may not be happy when partner jumps to four of the major. Another problem is that you may end up bidding a few aggressive games. In favor of bidding aggressively is that declarer will know where the missing high cards are.

What you gain with these methods, however, are good understandings that will keep you out of trouble. Knowing what a bid means is half the battle.

CASE TWO: YOUR PARTNER RESPONDS TO YOUR TAKEOUT DOUBLE AND OPENER REBIDS HIS SUIT

How do you show good hands with three-card support?

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	2♣	?

♠ A 8 3 2 ♥ K J 3 ♦ A Q 8 6 ♣ K 8

You doubled and your partner made a minimum response and opener rebid his suit. How can you show your good hands with three-card support? You can't cuebid his suit at the two-level any more. Is there anything you can do here that makes sense?

The solution is to double. This answer is not intuitive. Play that when opener rebids his suit, a double by you shows a good hand with three-card support for partner. You cannot have a penalty double since you earlier made a takeout double of opener's suit.

This is a decent 17 HCP hand that has a little shape. You can count this as 18 support points for hearts. A double shows this kind of hand. You may have more than this but if so, you will bid again.

Note that this rule applies when opener bids two of his original suit *or* three of his original suit. The difference is that you need a good 19 for your second double if opener is bidding his suit at the three-level.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	3♣	?

♠ K Q 7 4 ♥ A J 8 ♦ A K Q 7 ♣ 6 4

Double. This shows three hearts exactly, and a nice 19 support points or more. You are at the three-level, which is dangerous if you don't have a good fit. Do not use this double on less than this. The next hand shows good judgment by the doubler.

♠ K Q J 7 ♥ K Q J ♦ K 7 6 ♣ K 6 4

Pass. This is a balanced, crummy 18-point hand with no aces. You are at the three-level. Opposite a weak hand with no aces and four hearts, 3♥ may be down two or three and it might be doubled if hearts divide badly.

If you make one of these doubles showing three-card support and a big hand, your partner bids along these familiar lines.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	2♣	dbl
pass	?		

- 2♦ An offer to play in diamonds. North promises only four hearts. 2♦ is not forcing.
- 2♥ Your partner has no interest in anything. He may have just four hearts.
- 2♠ An unlikely bid. It is forcing. He may have four spades and five hearts and 6 or 7 points.
- 2NT Shows a stopper in clubs and about 7 points.
- 3♣ A forcing-to-game cuebid. Remember that he bid 1♥ so he doesn't have much.
- 3♦ Shows two suits with modest values. North has only four hearts and four or five diamonds. This bid is forcing.
- 3♥ Shows five or more hearts and about 6 points. It is forcing to game.
- 3NT Says partner has in the neighborhood of 7 or 8 points with good stoppers in opener's suit. Partner should have only four hearts.
- 4♥ Says partner has a maximum 1♥ bid with six hearts.
- Pass A willingness to defend 2♣ doubled. A possible hand:

♠ 10 7 ♥ K 8 4 3 ♦ 8 4 ♣ J 10 7 4 3

What if you have more than 17 or 18 points with three-card support?

It is possible that you will have 19 or more points with three-card support when you double. It is rare but it does happen. Here are a couple of examples showing how you might bid with one of these stronger hands.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	2♣	dbl
pass	2♥	pass	?

♠ AJ 8 4 ♥ A K 7 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ K 8 4

Bid 2NT. If you had only 18 or 19 points with three trumps, you would pass. 2NT says you have a balanced hand with around 20 to 21 points with three trumps.

♠ A K 9 4 ♥ A K 7 ♦ A Q J 2 ♣ 8 4

This may be an unbiddable hand. Your double of 2♣ was correct and your partner signed off in 2♥. You have about 22 support points so you owe your partner another bid. But what might that bid be?

You could bid 2♦, but that would show a good hand with spades and would not guarantee three hearts. Same for 3♦. I suspect that 3♥, breaking all the rules, is the best bid.

CASE THREE: YOUR PARTNER RESPONDS TO YOUR TAKEOUT DOUBLE AND OPENER BIDS A NEW SUIT

How do you show good hands with three-card support?

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	1♣	?

Here, opener bids a new suit. Now you have three interesting options.

1. You can cuebid opener's first suit.
2. You can double opener's new suit.
3. You can cuebid opener's new suit.

If you cuebid opener's first suit

If you have a big hand with three cards for partner's suit, you can make a cuebid of opener's first suit at the two-level. This is just like the cuebid sequences above.

If you double opener's new suit

This is a rare sequence and I wasn't sure of the best treatment. I knew for sure that the most important thing was for your partner to know what you mean. I discussed this with other players and found this to be acceptable to all. Here is my recommendation, which will be valid only if you and your partner discuss it and agree on it. Without discussion, most conventional understandings are little traps that will mess up well-intentioned auctions.

Play that a double of RHO's 1♦ bid shows a strong hand with 18 or more points and four good spades. You are suggesting partner pass but he is welcome to do something if he has a bad hand that offers a possible place to go. This double tends to deny three-card heart support.

First, an example of a hand that would double 1♦ on the auction being discussed.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	1♦	?

♠ A Q 9 8 ♥ A 7 ♦ K Q 7 4 ♣ A 10 3

Doubling 1♦ is reasonable. East may be a little out of line and he might earn a speeding ticket. If your partner hates 1♦, he can do something. Note that you do not have three cards in hearts. The idea is that when you doubled, you intended to bid 1NT next to show a big hand. When East bid spades, you acquired a new way to show your hand with your double.

Here are some hands that your partner may have:

♠ 7 2 ♥ K J 8 2 ♦ 10 8 6 ♣ J 8 7 4

If this is partner's hand, he will pass your double of 1♦. Partner has a few bits and pieces plus he has a doubleton spade. This is, under the circumstances, an easy decision.

♠ 7 ♥ 10 9 6 5 2 ♦ 9 6 3 2 ♣ 9 8 7

If partner has this hand, he will bid 2♦. He has no defense and he has two suits to offer. If he declares the hand, his distribution will be a big help. Since your double of 1♣ is for penalty, your partner expects you to have only two hearts. Here is one more auction to reinforce this discussion.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	1♣	2♣	?

1. If you double 2♣, it is for penalty. You probably had intended to rebid 1NT to show an 18- or 19-point notrump hand. You are not promising three-card support for partner's suit, although it is possible.
2. If you bid 2♦, you show the usual good hand with three-card spade support.

If you cuebid opener's new suit

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	1♣	2♣	3♣

This amazing auction won't come up. Having said that, if it does come up, you are showing a game-forcing hand of some sort. You might have a huge hand with four-card support for partner; you might have a wonderful hand with a suit of your own. Your intentions may not be known until the next round. I hesitated to mention this sequence, but someone always asks.

HOW DO YOU CONTINUE WHEN YOUR PARTNER MAKES A FREE BID AT THE ONE-LEVEL?

If opener passes, all the bidding tricks shown above are in place. A cuebid still shows a good three-card raise.

If opener bids something, you can also use the previous tricks with a few logical variations.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♦	1♥	1♠	?

On this auction, North's 1♥ bid is a free bid. South can expect his partner to have a few points so can be a little more aggressive with the tools shown above.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♦	1♥	1NT	dbl

If opener rebids 1NT instead of a suit, a double by South is pretty much for business. It does not change the fact that your original double was for takeout, but it does show you have extra values. When doubling 1NT, keep these things in mind:

1. Your partner's free 1♥ bid didn't promise much. He can have 4 or 5 HCP with some shape. You cannot count on him for a lot.
2. You must be especially wary that declarer may have a good suit to run. On the auction above, I would never double 1NT without something in clubs.
3. If you have four-card support for partner's suit, you are almost always better off raising partner to whatever level your hand is worth.

♠ K Q 9 5 ♥ A 9 8 4 ♦ A K 8 ♣ J 8

Bid 2♥. Doubling 1NT can work, but it can also come up flat. It would be no surprise to see declarer win five club tricks and another trick or two. If you had a club stopper, doubling would be sensible.

♠ A Q 9 5 ♥ A J 9 ♦ A Q J 8 ♣ 7 5

You can choose from a penalty double or raising hearts. You should worry that declarer has a lot of club tricks so raising hearts makes sense. If you choose to raise hearts, the way you would do that is with a 2♣ cuebid, showing a good hand with just three hearts. Here you know your partner has a little something so you do not have to be as concerned that you are getting him in trouble by raising with three hearts. Further, by raising this way, your partner will make good bidding choices if he chooses to bid again.

RULE

Since it is harder to defend a hand than to play it, it is usually better to bid to a known good contract than to double the opponents. If you know doubling is best, go for it.

But if, as here, doubling is tempting but uncertain and you are sure you have a good spot, you should bid it and let the opponents do the defending.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♦	1♥	2♣	?

Your bidding tools still include the double of 2♣ to show a good three-card raise. The main point in offering this auction is to help clear up any questions of definitions. These tools are great but they have to be used properly without misunderstandings. The cost is extreme when you double something to show a good raise and your partner misunderstands and passes.

ASIDE – When partner bids a new suit at the two-level

The first part of this chapter assumed that your partner was able to bid at the one-level. This case leaves you with some bidding room that you can use. Things change when you double and partner bids a new suit at the two-level.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
pass	2♣	pass	2♥
pass	?		

Your 2♥ bid shows a good hand but it won't be so easy to untangle what to do since you have lost important bidding room.

I suggest that over 2♥, if your partner has a bad hand he should bid 3♣ (rebidding his suit) to show a weak hand. Any other bid by your partner shows some values and is forcing to game. If your partner bids a new suit, it is usually high cards, not a suit. Here are some examples of what your partner might bid after you cuebid 2♥.

♠ 8 4 ♥ 7 5 3 2 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ J 10 4 2

This is a lousy hand. Bid 3♣, telling partner you have a bad hand. You do not promise five clubs when you rebid them.

♠ K 5 4 ♥ 7 5 2 ♦ J 4 ♣ Q 10 4 3 2

Under the circumstances, this is a pretty good hand. Bid 2♠, which does not show a suit but does show some points and something in spades. If you had four spades you would have bid them earlier instead of 2♣.

♠ 8 7 4 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ Q 10 3 2

Again, you have some useful values. Bid 3♦, implying something in diamonds. These bids are not as useful as they might be but they are better than nothing.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

IRKSOME AUCTIONS AND AGREEMENTS TO HELP WITH THEM

AUCTIONS WHERE YOUR SIDE DOUBLES AN OPPONENT AND SOMEONE REDOUBLES

Most partnerships will have talked about this sequence:

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
redbl	?	?	?

In fact it was discussed earlier in the book.

However, there are other auctions where your side makes a takeout double and the next player redoubles. These require different agreements if you are to find your best contract.

YOUR PARTNER MAKES A BALANCING DOUBLE AND OPENER REDOUBLES

West	North	East	South
		1♠	pass
pass	dbl	redbl	?

You need to discuss this bidding situation. Here is the agreement that you will enjoy the most.

Play that if you want to defend against 1♠, doubled and redoubled, you pass. This is a strong opinion. Partner is expected to pass too, although he may choose to bid. A couple of examples:

♠ A J 10 7 3 ♥ Q J 4 ♦ K 8 3 ♣ 5 2

You have four spade tricks, pushers in the red suits, and a doubleton. Your partner has at least 8 or 9 points and can have more. Opener has probably redoubled with an 18-point hand or so, but he was not counting on your

having all these spades. If your partner knows to pass it out in 1♠ doubled and redoubled, you rate to do quite well.

♠ J 8 7 4 ♥ Q J 4 ♦ 8 4 3 2 ♣ 9 7

When you have this hand you do not dare pass because your partner will think you want to defend. You have to bid 2♦.

THEY BID AND RAISE. YOUR PARTNER DOUBLES. OPENER REDOUBLES

HOW DO YOU FIND YOUR BEST CONTRACT?

It can be exciting.

West	North	East	South
2♠	dbl	1♠ redbl	pass ?

What do you do with each of these hands?

1. ♠ A Q J 10 8 ♥ 5 3 ♦ 9 5 3 ♣ 9 3 2

2. ♠ 8 7 4 3 ♥ J 7 3 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ 10 9 4

On the first hand, you would like to pass and have partner do likewise.

With the second hand, you would like to pass and have partner bid his best suit.

How can you bid so as to handle both of these hands?

You have to have an agreement about what your bids mean. That agreement is simple.

If you want your partner to pass, as is the case on the first hand above, you pass and partner knows you want him to pass too.

On the second hand, you cannot pass because your partner may pass and they will make 2♠ doubled and redoubled with overtricks. As bad as the second hand is, you have to find a bid.

Here are examples:

West	North	East	South
2♥	dbl	1♥ redbl	pass ?

♠ J 8 7 4 ♥ 9 6 5 3 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ 10 2

Bid 2♦. This one is easy. You have a suit so you bid it. Passing does not ask your partner to bid a suit. It asks your partner to pass.

♠ 4 ♥ K J 9 8 4 ♦ K 10 3 ♣ 10 9 8 3

Pass. This is an extremely strong suggestion that your partner pass. He should pass unless he has a clear reason to bid. If he does pass, lead the ♠10.

♠ 4 2 ♥ J 9 8 4 ♦ 8 6 4 ♣ 10 9 8 3

Bid 3♦. You cannot pass since you do not want partner to pass also. Your 3♦ bid reeks of having a weak hand and your partner should pass unless he has something worth bidding. He should not count on you to have anything.

♠ 10 6 3 ♥ Q 8 4 3 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ J 4 3

Bid 2♦. Your side is in trouble but at least it is trouble at the two-level, not the three-level. Your wish is that they keep bidding.

♠ 10 6 ♥ Q 4 3 ♦ 10 8 7 4 ♣ J 4 3 2

Bid 2NT. This is defined as some kind of escape bid. Your partner is asked to bid a suit. On this hand, since you did not bid spades, it is logical that you have the minors. One hopes that you do not experience this bidding situation but if you do, at least you have a clue what to do.

West	North	East	South
2♦	dbl	1♠ redbl	pass ?

♠ 8 7 4 3 ♥ J 7 3 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ 10 9 4

I showed you this kind of hand above. You have had time to think about it. What do you bid when opener redoubles 2♦?

The answer is that you bid 2NT, telling partner to escape to his best suit. He will tend to bid a minor suit. When he does that, you pass and hope. Sometimes they get caught up in their fit and save you from a bad adventure. That would be the best of all worlds.

RHO OPENS WITH A PREEMPT AND YOU DOUBLE FOR TAKEOUT. LHO REDOUBLES, ANNOUNCING A BIG HAND. THIS IS PASSED TO YOU

WHAT'S GOING ON?

This is a rare situation but it can be a costly one if you do the wrong thing. Here is a thought that at least will give you a fighting chance.

West	North	East	South
		2♠	dbl
redbl	pass	pass	?
West	North	East	South
		3♠	dbl
redbl	pass	pass	?

Both of these auctions happen and when they do, the potential swing between right and wrong is enormous. If you were about to get 1600 and get a minus score instead, it is a disaster. Is there a way to know what to do? The answer is yes. It requires an understanding.

AN IMPORTANT AGREEMENT

If an opponent opens with a weak two- or three-bid and you double it, and the next player redoubles, you need to know what your partner's bids mean. Here are my suggestions:

1. A pass says your partner is happy defending against their contract.
2. A bid is natural and does not imply any values.
3. 2NT, if available, tends to be takeout of some sort.

Aside from anything else, the material in this short discussion is important because it gives you an agreement to fall back on. The potential swings here are huge. If you know what the bids mean, you will be in a position to get your share of the good stuff and to avoid some of the bad stuff.

If you do not like these agreements, then I can give you one last piece of advice. Come up with agreements that you do like. *Make sure you both agree.* Then whatever happens, at least you will be on the same street going in the same direction.

YOU USE MICHAELS OR THE UNUSUAL NOTRUMP AND THEN MAKE A DOUBLE

What does your double show? Odd as this chapter heading is, it is a real situation. Here is an example:

West	North	East	South
		1♦	2♦ ¹
3♦	pass	pass	?

1. Michaels

♠ A K J 6 3 ♥ K Q 10 8 3 ♦ 3 ♣ A 6

With all these major-suit cards and with nice values, it is easy to feel that you should bid again. But reflecting that partner knows about your shape, you shouldn't bid again unless you have more than expected. This hand, for example, has lots of extras.

How should you continue? Should you bid 3♥ or 3♣ or is there something else? Perhaps you should cuebid again and demand a major suit from North. How would you feel if you bid and discovered partner has this hand?

♠ 7 4 ♥ 6 2 ♦ J 10 8 4 ♣ Q J 7 4 3

This is not the hand you were looking for. Worse, after you have gone down a few in whatever spot you play, you note they were going down in 3♦. A poor exchange. Is there a way to do better?

One way is to pass it out in 3♦. But that is pessimistic. All you need to make a partscore is three or four cards in either major and nothing terrible happening in the play. Heck, if North has four hearts to the jack and nothing else, you might have a game.

The solution is to double. This tells partner you have a maximum Michaels bid and you want him to bid. *But if he doesn't have the right hand, he may pass for penalty.* You promise a big hand since you force the bidding to the three-level. Partner can and will count on that.

Given the above sequence, North will bid whenever he has a four-card major and will usually bid when he has a three-card major. He knows you have five of each so bidding a three-card suit is okay. If your partner has the hand shown above, he will pass your double. With luck, you will set them three tricks. Practically speaking, down two is reasonable. Best is that you were not going to do well in a major unless you were lucky.

In the same way, you can do the same trick with the unusual notrump.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	2NT
3♠	pass	pass	?

♠ 2 ♥ K 4 ♦ A Q 10 9 4 ♣ A K 9 8 5

Purists might complain about using the unusual notrump on this hand. I see nothing wrong with it. If you overcall 2♦ and LHO bids 4♣, will you be happy bidding 5♣? By bidding 2NT, you show your shape. Now when West raises spades, you can double to say that you have a good hand along with your shape values. North can sit for the double or can bid something. Giving partner an educated choice is better than making an arbitrary choice yourself.

Don't use this delayed double trick without cause. If you have an exceptional unusual notrump or Michaels hand that wants to bid again, you can continue bidding in other ways.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	2NT
3♥	pass	pass	?

♠ 7 ♥ — ♦ K Q J 8 7 3 ♣ A Q 10 9 6 2

Bid 3NT. In spite of partner's silence you still want him to pick a minor suit. 3NT will drag a bid out of him, which doubling might not do. Reserve the double for a hand with defensive strength so that if partner passes, your hand will contribute its share.

Incidentally, it would have been reasonable for you to bid 4NT immediately instead of 2NT. This way you get to shut out much of their bidding.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	2♦
3♦	pass	pass	?

♠ A Q 10 8 5 ♥ K Q J 9 7 3 ♦ 7 ♣ 4

Bid 3♥. Your extra shape and good suits entitle you to bid again. 3♥ confirms that your hearts are longer than your spades and the fact that you are bidding again confirms you have a good hand.

If you had 6-6 distribution, your correct bid at this stage would be 4♦. Doubling shows you have a 5-5 hand with extra high cards. 6-5 and 6-6 hands should not end up on defense. At least, not until they have shown their full distribution.

YOU PREEMPT, THEY BID, AND YOUR PARTNER PASSES. CAN YOU BID AGAIN?

WARNING – This is dangerous stuff.

West	North	East	South
3♥	pass	pass	3♦
♠ Q 6 3	♥ —	♦ A K J 7 5 4 3	♣ 10 8 3

With an understanding partner, you can double 3♥. The idea is that they have stopped in 3♥. This suggests that they do not have a good fit since East did not raise. You can double this. It is, in essence, a takeout double, but you rather expect your partner will pass and convert it to penalties. Here is the hand that created this problem.

Both vul.

♠ A K 4	♠ J 10 8 2									
♥ A J 9 7 4 2	♥ K Q 10 8									
♦ 9 8	♦ 6									
♣ J 9	♣ K Q 6 2									
	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S	
	N									
W		E								
	S									
	♠ 9 7 5									
	♥ 6 5 3									
	♦ Q 10 2									
	♣ A 7 5 4									
♠ Q 6 3	♠ Q 6 3									
♥ —	♥ —									
♦ A K J 7 5 4 3	♦ A K J 7 5 4 3									
♣ 10 8 3	♣ 10 8 3									

West bid 3♥ over 3♦. Some would double with the North hand but it is probably not a good idea. On this hand it turns out to be okay since South has a good preempt. Facing many preempts, 3♥ doubled might make. For all North knows, East will raise to 4♥.

When 3♥ is passed to South, he can easily imagine that North has some hearts. South doubles, which usually ends the bidding. North is allowed to bid 4♦ and he might even bid an unbid suit, but that is unexpected.

West will be down three tricks, which is a fine result for North-South. Note that South has some defense. He should not double with a garbage preempt.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RESPONDER'S SECOND BID AFTER PARTNER'S TAKEOUT DOUBLE

This chapter discusses what responder may do on various sequences on his second bid. Since the number of situations is huge, I am putting in a few general sections rather than a number of specific situations as I did in other cases.

RESPONDER MAKES A SIMPLE RESPONSE TO A TAKEOUT DOUBLE

How, if at all, should responder continue on the next round?

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	1♠
2♦	pass	pass	?

♠ J 10 5 4 ♥ K 10 6 3 ♦ 10 8 7 ♣ Q 8

Bid 2♥. North promised a major and will almost always have at least one four-card major. North's pass over 2♦ suggests a minimum double but your hand is pretty good assuming you can find a 4-4 fit, which is likely. Bid 2♥, which allows your partner to pass or correct to 2♠. Note that you do not promise a good hand. You did not make a stronger bid so your partner will expect a maximum of 7 or so HCP.

Note that South responded 1♠. This allowed South to compete to 2♥ later. North was able to pass 2♥ or correct to 2♠. If South responds 1♥, he has to bid 2♠ next, which is bad if North prefers to play in hearts.

♠ J 10 5 4 2 ♥ K 5 3 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ 9 3

Bid 2♠ without any regrets. You have a fair five-card suit, meaning you have at least eight spades, perhaps nine. Your chances of setting 2♦ are almost zero and your chances of making 2♠ or going down one are pretty fair. This should be a clear decision by you.

Just because you do not have a good hand doesn't mean you have a bad hand. There are three ranges of minimum hands that respond with a simple bid of a suit.

Really lousy hands, 0 to 4 points: you make your response and do not bid again unless you have to.

Hands with a little redemption, 3 to 6 points: you may make a free bid at the one-level. You may make a minimum bid and then bid again.

Hands that actually have a future, 4 to 8 points: you may make a free bid at the one- or two-level and then bid again.

On this hand, you bid 1♠ and then bid again. Your partner can't be sure what you have but he knows you have something you like. The good news is that if your partner is listening to the bidding, he will never bid again. There is no hand your partner can have that would pass over 2♦ and then bid again when you bid 2♠.

♠ Q 10 5 4 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 7 5 4 3 ♣ K 10 4

It is tempting to bid 2♠ with this hand. I would not blame you for doing that. The reason I would pass is that my partner heard me bid 1♠ and he would strain to raise to 2♠ if he could. On this sequence, my partner rates to have just three spades or perhaps a minimum double with four trumps. If you were vulnerable, passing would be best for sure.

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

♠ 10 8 4 3 ♥ K J ♦ Q 9 3 ♣ J 10 5 3

Raise to 2NT. You could have one more point than this. If you had two more points you should raise to 3NT. Many players double and bid 1NT with bad hands. They also double and bid 1NT with some good hands. This makes it hard for responder to know what to do. If your partner properly has a good hand for his bidding, you should be able to raise with this hand.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♥	pass
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠ Q 7 5 4 ♥ 8 6 4 ♦ Q J ♣ 8 6 4 3

Bid 4♠. Your partner says he has a big hand. You have a nice hand. In support of spades you have around 7 or 8 points. If you felt you should have bid 2♠ over 2♥, that is a good thought. I would not, but it would cross my mind.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	1♠
pass	2♠	pass	?

♦ A Q 7 4 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ J 10 3 ♣ J 4 3

Bid 3♠. North needs a pretty good hand to raise to 2♠. People say that you need 17 or 18 support points, but I think a little less is acceptable. But not too much less. This South hand is about as good as it can be. Its shape is poor, however. Still, with maximum high-card points, it is worth a raise to 3♠. One thing South can count on is North's having four spades.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	1♠
2♣	2♠	pass	?

♦ A Q 7 4 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ J 10 3 ♣ J 4 3

This hand and the previous hand are the same. Something important is happening in the bidding. On the previous hand, you bid 1♠ and opener passed and your partner raised. He did not have to raise. His raise showed extra values.

On this hand you bid 1♠ and opener rebid 2♣. Your partner again raised to 2♠. Here, he doesn't show as big a hand. Your partner can raise more aggressively because it is so important that he tell you about his four-card support. He shouldn't bid 2♠ here with a bad hand, but he doesn't need as good a hand as on the previous auction.

I would accept passing 2♠ when partner bids it in competition since he is likely to be pressing more than when opener did not bid.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	1♥
pass	2♥	pass	?

♦ K J 3 ♥ Q 10 8 5 3 ♦ 6 4 3 2 ♣ 3

Bid 4♥. This hand shows an important difference between a hand with high cards and a hand with shape. On the previous hand South had 8 HCP with four good trumps but bad distribution. I suggested that you *might* make a game try according to how the bidding went. On the auction here you have a fifth trump (a hugely important card) and you have excellent distribution. This hand is an example of how a hand with 6 HCP with shape improves enough to bid game, whereas an 8 HCP hand without shape is barely worth a game try.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	1♥
pass	3♥	pass	?

♠J 10 3 ♥ K J 5 3 ♦ 10 8 4 3 ♣ J 10

Bid 4♥. When partner makes a jump raise, he is showing the goods. You may have 0 to 8 points and he must cater to hands where you are really broke. When partner makes a jump raise you should think of reasons to bid rather than reasons to pass. You have only 6 HCP but your shape is useful. Just consider how much less you could have and you will see that your hand has good value. This is not a maximum 1♥ response but it is a good relative to many of the stinkers you could have. When you have a few hands like the following, you will learn to appreciate the 6-point hand you do have.

♠J 8 4 ♥ 9 6 4 3 ♦ 8 4 3 ♣ J 5 3

It could be worse. I gave you two jacks.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	1♥
2♦	dbl	pass	?

♠ 9 4 ♥ Q 8 5 3 ♦ 6 4 3 ♣ 10 7 4 3

Bid 2♥. Partner's double of 2♦ is not for penalty. It is a special bid saying that he has about 18 points with exactly three hearts. This is his way of showing a very strong hand in support of hearts while keeping the bidding low in case you have a hand like this one. The way you show a really weak hand like this one is to bid your suit again. 2♥ does not show a long suit; it shows a weak hand which may have five hearts but is likely to have just four. Your partner might have some other kind of strong hand and if so, he will show that on the next round.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	1♥
pass	2♣	pass	2♥
pass	2♠	pass	?

♠ 8 3 ♥ 9 7 5 4 ♦ J 8 3 ♣ Q 4 3 2

Pass. When your partner doubles and then cuebids opener's suit, he usually says he has a big hand with three-card support for your suit. When you sign

off with 2♥ and he bids 2♦, he is changing the message. He is saying he has a very good hand with spades. Remember that if he had bid 2♦ over your 1♥, that would show an excellent hand with a spade suit. When he cuebids and then bids spades, he shows a bigger hand yet. As big a hand as he is promising, you can still pass if you wish.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	1♥
pass	2♦	pass	2♥
pass	3♦	pass	?

♠ 8 3 ♥ 9 7 5 4 ♦ J 8 3 ♣ Q 4 3 2

This is a rare auction and I show it here so you will know what it means when it comes up. When North doubles and then cuebids, he shows a good hand. When he cuebids and then cuebids again, he shows a hand that is insisting on game. He may have, for instance:

♠ A K Q J 5 ♥ A Q ♦ 5 4 ♣ A K J 10

Knowing partner has a huge hand is nice but admittedly it does not make life easier for South to find a bid. The issue is that a double followed by two cuebids is forcing to game. I would bid 4♣ here, but that is not the point of this discussion.

Earlier in the book, I discussed variations on the themes of these last three hands. If you have a serious partnership, I suggest reviewing Chapter 12 (page 209).

RESPONDER MAKES A JUMP RESPONSE TO A TAKEOUT DOUBLE

How, if at all, should responder bid on the next round?

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♥
pass	3♥	pass	?

♠ 7 5 4 ♥ K Q 6 3 ♦ J 9 8 ♣ K J 3

Pass. The reason is that your hand has a number of small flaws. You have the values for 2♥ but you have bad shape, your clubs are potentially worthless, and you have only four hearts.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	2♠
3♥	pass	pass	?

♠ K 7 6 5 4 3 ♥ 10 6 3 ♦ Q 8 ♣ Q 8

Bid 3♠. You have a minimum 2♠ bid but you have one of the greatest of features; a six-card suit. You also have minor-suit honors that should help. You have learned that your partner has a minimum double but you have excellent offense and limited defense. Your partner should pass this bid without worry since he knows you bid just 2♠ the first time. If your partner had bid 3♠ over West's 3♥ bid, you would have bid 4♣.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	2♠
pass	3♦	pass	?

♠ J 10 5 4 ♥ 8 3 ♦ A 10 7 6 ♣ K J 4

Bid 3NT. You aren't sure what North means yet but a likely candidate is a good hand with three cards in spades. You have a good diamond stopper and you have fair high cards. Further, you do not have a fifth spade.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	3♣
pass	3♥	pass	?

♠ 8 ♥ 8 7 2 ♦ Q 8 7 ♣ A Q 9 8 7 5

Bid 4♣. North is asking for notrump and you can't bid it. You have nothing else to do other than rebid your clubs.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	2♥
3♦	pass	pass	?

♠ K 4 3 ♥ A K 5 3 ♦ 4 2 ♣ 7 5 4 3

This is a hard hand. You have 10 nice points and face a takeout double. You would like to bid again but what can you bid? If you bid 3♥, your partner better have four of them or you won't like your contract. Passing is a definite possibility.

Expert Trick

This discussion is important. You might double 3♦. But your partner had better know what you mean. The meaning of this double is not that you have a lot of diamond tricks. Opener is showing a good suit so you really won't have holdings like ♦QJ98. Your double says that you have only four hearts with maximum points and a good defensive hand. Your values are limited by your jump to 2♥. If you had five hearts you would tend to bid them again. Your partner is not forced to pass your double. If he has four hearts he should consider bidding 3♥. If he has three hearts he will almost always pass your double, and now the defense hopes to get five tricks. You have two likely heart winners and your ♠K is usually a trick too. The definition of this double is important and both of you have to understand that it is not a command. It is a descriptive bid, allowing your partner to use his judgment.

RESPONDER MAKES A CUEBID IN RESPONSE TO A TAKEOUT DOUBLE

How does responder continue on the next round?

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2♥	pass	?

♠ Q 7 5 4 ♥ K Q 6 3 ♦ K J 9 ♣ 9 4

Bid 3♥. Your cuebid showed an invitational hand or a game-forcing hand. When you raise to 3♥, you show you have both majors with invitational points.

♠ Q J 8 7 3 ♥ A 3 ♦ A 10 7 5 ♣ 10 3

Bid 2♠. When you cuebid and then bid a new suit, you show a game-forcing hand. You might have just four spades for this bid.

♠ A Q 8 7 5 4 ♥ K 3 ♦ K Q 9 2 ♣ 3

Bid 3♠. When you cuebid and bid a new suit it is forcing to game. Here you can jump to 3♠, which shows a huge hand with a good, long suit. You are interested in slam.

♠ Q J 6 5 ♥ A Q ♦ J 9 8 2 ♣ J 8 2

Your cuebid was incorrect. This hand has invitational values and it has just one major suit. Your first bid should have been 2♠.

♠ 8 4 ♥ Q 3 ♦ A K Q 8 7 4 ♣ 9 3 2

Bid 3♦. Your cuebid was a tiny overbid but with such a good diamond suit bidding just 2♦ on the first round would have been conservative. Your intent is to get partner to bid 3NT if possible.

♠ J 10 7 4 ♥ A J 10 4 ♦ K Q J ♣ 8 2

Raise to 4♥. If you cuebid and then raise to 3♥ it shows invitational values. A 4♥ bid says you have game values but do not have slam interest.

♠ A J 10 2 ♥ Q J 10 7 ♦ A Q 10 7 ♣ 8

Bid 4♣. This is a splinter bid showing heart support, a singleton club, and interest in slam. I highly recommend splinter bids.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	2♦
pass	2NT	pass	?

♠ A J 8 4 ♥ K 8 5 4 ♦ 9 4 ♣ Q 9 7

Bid 3NT. This may not make. The reason for bidding 3NT is that you are assuming your partner has a little extra. He did double and doesn't have a major suit, so he should have something to compensate for his bad distribution. If you think your partner should bid 3NT with all 14-point hands, consider that 3NT would get in your way on all hands that had intended to bid a suit next.

♠ A J ♥ J 10 7 4 3 ♦ 4 ♣ A J 5 3 2

Bid 3♥. This shapely hand is so good that you intend to force to game. 3♥ is forcing, showing five or more hearts. If partner bids 3NT, you should bid 4♣.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	2♣
pass	2♥	pass	3♣
pass	3NT	pass	4♥

♠ A 4 ♥ K Q 10 4 ♦ K J 7 5 4 ♣ A 7

This is an example auction showing how you might cuebid and then cuebid again before raising your partner. You show slam interest and promise a control in clubs.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE OPPONENTS OPEN WITH A PREEMPT

Preempts are a hassle and I sympathize if you hate bidding against them. I would like to give you a perfect cure, but short of gagging your opponents, you will have to live with them. Following is a rough description of what your doubles show. Be sure you do not allow the ‘weakness’ of their bid to influence you into an indiscretion.

When RHO opens with a preempt, your requirements for a takeout double change a little. There is one aspect that you must be aware of. When your RHO preempts, ostensibly showing a weak hand, it *does not* mean that you can act frivolously. If they open with 2♥, showing 6 to 10 points, and you have 14, it means there are 16 to 20 points unaccounted for. You cannot assume that your partner will have more of the missing points than your LHO. Experience has shown that you need a little more to double a weak two-bid than you do to double an opening one-bid.

This book won’t discuss the complete nuances of defending against preempts but I can give you a short synopsis of what you need to come into the bidding with a double.

THE RULE OF 7

There are some books and articles which are devoted entirely to bidding against preempts. Here I will touch on one guideline called the *Rule of 7*. Whoever invented it deserves credit.

The Rule of 7 works like this. If your RHO preempts and you are wondering whether you have enough to double or overcall, ask yourself this question: *If my partner has 7 nondescript points, will it be enough for my bid to be safe?* If you feel the answer is yes, then you should bid. The Rule of 7 will be illustrated by some of the hands in this section.

West	North	East	South
		2♦	?

♠ K Q 7 ♥ A J 7 5 ♦ 3 2 ♣ A J 7 6

This is about par for a takeout double of 2♦. Note that this hand has only three spades. It is acceptable to double a one-level opening bid with just three cards in an unbid major and it is equally okay to double a preempt with three cards in an unbid major. The cost of passing with hands like this is high. There are

dangers if you bid, but the price of hiding in the sand is greater than the price of bidding.

How does the Rule of 7 apply here? You have 16 total points. If your partner has 7, your partnership has 23, which is enough to hope for a two-level contract. Compare this hand with the next.

♠ A J 7 ♥ K J 4 ♦ 6 3 2 ♣ A J 6 3

Pass. This hand comes from the second chapter, where I suggested it was acceptable to double 1♦. Being at the two-level, there is enough danger that you should pass. Be cautious with balanced hands.

On this hand, the Rule of 7 also gives you a confirming opinion. Counting your hand as worth 13 points (deduct 1 point for the 4-3-3-3 shape), and adding in your partner's hoped for 7, you get to 20. Just not enough for you to make a takeout double.

WHEN RHO OPENS WITH A WEAK TWO-BID

The Rule of 7, shown above, will give you some good guidance on whether you should be bidding at all. Since this is a book on takeout doubles, I will look mainly at takeout double situations in cases where there has been more bidding than just the weak two-bid. Here are a few examples of hands that might wish to double a weak 2♦ bid. Assume neither side is vulnerable.

West	North	East	South
		2♦	?

♠ K J 7 4 ♥ Q 5 4 ♦ 5 3 ♣ A J 6 4

Pass. You might double a 1♦ opening bid. But not a 2♦ bid. You have a minimum hand and your shape is not that good. Your heart holding is a minus. Overall, this is just too weak to bid over 2♦.

♠ A K 4 3 ♥ 9 7 4 3 ♦ 3 ♣ K Q 7 3

Double. Your shape is much better than the previous hand. Shape counts for a lot.

♠ A Q J 9 4 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A 3 ♣ A K 9 8

Double. You intend to bid spades next. The usual rule applies here. If you double and then bid a suit, you show a good hand of this approximate description.

♠ K Q 8 7 4 ♥ A K 10 9 7 ♦ 3 ♣ K 4

Don't double. Use the Michaels convention instead. Bid 3♦.

WHEN LHO OPENS WITH A WEAK TWO-BID AND RHO BIDS

A situation which comes up regularly at the table, but which has not been written about in detail, is this. Your LHO opens with a weak two-bid and your RHO responds. What does a double by you mean?

Obviously, there are many bids your RHO can make, so I will look at them one at a time.

WHEN RHO RAISES TO THE THREE-LEVEL

West	North	East	South
2♥	pass	3♥	?

When RHO raises a weak two-bid to the three-level, a double by you is for takeout, but the values for the double are changed. You know that as far as opener is concerned, the bidding was over when RHO raised to 3♥. If you pass, opener will pass, and North will have to decide whether to reopen or to pass. Since the bidding is at the three-level, your partner will have to be cautious. It would not be wise for him to reopen and discover that East's raise had a little substance. Remembering that North could not act over 2♥, you know he doesn't have a lot of high cards. If North is going to reopen he will need excellent distribution. If North has two or three hearts, there is virtually no way that he will bid. Recognizing this, experts have learned to make an adjustment.

♠ A 8 7 3 ♥ 4 ♦ K 10 5 3 ♣ Q J 8 4

This hand isn't worth a bid if your RHO opens either 2♥ or 3♥. Yet it is worth bidding with when West opens 2♥ and East raises to three.

When the bidding goes 2♥ - pass - 3♥, their side is through bidding. It is likely that East has a weak hand with some heart support. He might have a good hand but that is rare. Mostly, East is just furthering the preempt. Very often, after a sequence like this you discover you could have made something or could have doubled them for penalty. The problem is, who should be the one to do something?

The answer is that it is up to you. When RHO bids 3♥, you know this is likely to be the end of the bidding. If you pass, your partner will have to make a decision and it is likely that he has something like this hand:

♠ 10 9 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ A J 8 4 2 ♣ K 9 3

Your partner has a few points but he has three hearts, which is bad for balancing. He can't double and it would be very risky for him to bid 4♦.

♠ A 8 7 3 ♥ 4 ♦ K 10 5 3 ♣ Q J 8 4

Here is your hand again. You, on the other hand, have a singleton heart and you have takeout double shape. You are the one who has to double 3♥. There is a name for this double. It is called a *pre-balancing double*. You have the shape to bid and you are pretty sure your partner has a decent hand. Double and keep your side involved. Your partner should be aware that you may be bidding with less than normal values and should not do anything really wild. Note that if he has four good hearts (possible against aggressive opponents) he can pass for penalties. Remember this situation. It comes up more often than you might think.

Your side's constructive bidding will be less accurate than normal since North won't know if you are doubling with a light hand or with a full value hand. Can't be helped. The pluses outweigh the minuses.

WHEN RHO RESPONDS 2NT

This is usually an artificial bid asking for information from opener. It may ask for a feature or it may be Ogust, which asks opener for general information about his hand. It is possible that RHO has a big hand but there is also the lurking worry that RHO is trying to rob you by putting up a show of strength when he has nothing at all. You can use a double here to say that you would have doubled for takeout if the weak two-bid had been on your right. This requires a decent hand with good shape.

West	North	East	South
2♥	pass	2NT	?

♠ K Q 8 2 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A Q 7 2 ♣ K J 10

Double for takeout. It is safer to double now than to wait and act at the three-level. This is about as weak a hand as you will have for this bid.

♠ 7 3 ♥ 6 3 ♦ A K Q J 4 ♣ A 7 4 3

Bid 3♦ if you wish, but do not double. Double doesn't say you can set 2NT. Double is for takeout. If you double, your partner will bid spades. If your RHO had opened 2♥ you wouldn't double with this hand. You would either overcall 3♦ or pass.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

When RHO bids 2NT, he usually has some values. Do not bid in the same aggressive fashion as when your RHO raises 2♥ to 3♥.

West	North	East	South
2♥	pass	2NT	?

♠ A Q J 7 4 ♥ 2 ♦ 8 ♣ K Q 10 8 5 3

If you wish, you can bid 3♥ to show a two-suiter. If, for instance, you use Michaels over 1♥ to show spades and an unknown minor suit, you can do the same thing here. The only difference is that your cuebid is at the three-level. I suggest you discuss this one with your partner. The only reason this example is here is that it is worth discussion, but rarely gets it. If you do not use Michaels, you are better off bidding 3♣ and then bidding spades at your next turn. It is important to bid this way to let partner know your shape. In a later section I will show how this hand might use a variation on Leaping Michaels.

WHEN RHO BIDS A NEW SUIT IN RESPONSE TO A WEAK TWO

A double by you continues to be for takeout. You should have the unbid suits and a good hand. This area is a little cloudy, but to some degree, you can avoid disasters by defining the double as takeout.

West	North	East	South
2♥	pass	2♠	?

♠ 6 2 ♥ A 5 ♦ A Q 8 7 ♣ K Q J 7 2

Double for takeout. You might think of bidding 2NT, unusual for the minors, but that bid is generally treated as showing a good notrump hand.

♠ A K J 9 7 2 ♥ 3 2 ♦ K 8 3 ♣ Q 8

Pass. RHO's 2♦ bid smells, but there is no way to show spades at this juncture. If

East is psyching, he has picked a good time to do it. A reasonable approach is to pass and bid 3♠ later if your hand is good enough. Here is a slightly better hand to consider.

♠ A K J 9 7 3 2 ♥ 3 ♦ K 8 3 ♣ Q 8

There is an agreement you might like to consider. Play that if RHO bids a new suit at the two-level, a bid by you in that suit is natural.

If you have this agreement you can bid 3♠ over 2♠, intending to show a good hand with spades. There is no other useful meaning for this 3♠ bid. Your partner will expect a pretty good hand, and you have one. With a lesser hand you would pass and reserve the right to bid 3♠ later. Knowing that a 3♠ bid over 2♠ shows a good hand and bidding 3♠ later shows a competitive hand is a good agreement to have.

WHEN RHO RAISES TO GAME

West	North	East	South
2♥	pass	4♥	?

A double is still for takeout. In the long run, you are more likely to have a takeout double hand than a big hand with defensive tricks. The reason is that RHO won't jump to 4♥ unless he has a good heart fit. He may catch you with a lot of points, but you don't rate to have a lot of heart tricks. It is much better to play that double is for takeout, which caters to most of the good hands you will have. This treatment should also apply when they raise 2♠ or 3♠ to 4♠. Double is still best played as takeout.

West	North	East	South
2♠	pass	4♠	?

♠ 3 ♥ K Q 7 2 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ A J 7 3 2

Double. This is the hand type your partner will expect if you double. You can have less, you can have more, but you will always have something like this shape.

West	North	East	South
2♥	pass	4♥	?

♠ Q J ♥ K J 10 ♦ A K 3 2 ♣ A Q 10 7

Pass. Double is for takeout and partner will view it as such. He may pass if he feels like it, but he will try to bid and the suit he rates to bid is spades. Pass this hand, get your pitiful 100 or so, and take your poor result like a trooper. Then, next time the opponents bid this way and you have a real takeout double hand, you will double. Your partner will trust you to have a takeout double kind of hand and will make the right decision, whatever it is. Your partnership will be functioning on an even keel.

IMPORTANT ASIDE

Many players play that a double of an opening $4\spades$ bid is for penalty. These players usually play that these two doubles are for penalty too.

West	North	East	South
$2\spades$	pass	$4\spades$	dbl

or

West	North	East	South
$3\spades$	pass	$4\spades$	dbl

This is not a good idea. You will have way more hands with takeout double shape than hands that want to double for penalty.

Note: If your opponents were bidding any suit other than spades on these two auctions, a double would still be for takeout.

WHEN RHO OPENS WITH A THREE-BID

You are a level higher than when they open with a two-bid. It is getting a little scary to bid at this level. Your bids, including takeout doubles, must cater to the additional dangers.

The same rationale that applied when they opened with a weak two-bid applies when they open with a weak three-bid. Because you are a level higher, you need a tad more than you did to double at the two-level. Keep in mind that your partner will take your double out, so you have to have the right shape when you double. Don't double without support for one of the missing suits unless you have enough points to be prepared for it. Keep the Rule of 7 in mind here. It will help your judgment at the three-level, too.

WHEN THEY OPEN WITH $4\clubsuit$ OR $4\heartsuit$

Bidding against $4\clubsuit$ and $4\heartsuit$ is easy. You double for takeout or you bid a suit or you pass. If you bid, you need to recognize that your side is at the four- or five-level so you need good hands. You must give up on many hands that would

have been worth a bid at lower levels. Remember that your partner won't have any room to explore.

West	North	East	South
		4♦	?

♠ J 7 4 3 ♥ A Q 7 ♦ 2 ♣ A 9 7 5 4

You would be willing to double 2♦. You would not care to double 3♦. Doubling 4♦ is just too risky. Even if you had perfect shape (one more heart and one less club) doubling would be too much. The Rule of 7 says you need about 17 support points to come in at the four-level. This hand is short of that.

♠ A K 5 ♥ Q J 5 ♦ 3 2 ♣ K Q 9 7 4

Still a pass. Better values but not even one four-card major. You may play in a 4-3 fit and given the bidding, there will be some distribution to contend with. Learn to pass hands like this one.

Note that there is virtually no useful meaning for a 4NT bid over 4♣ or 4♦. If you are theoretically insistent on finding a meaning, I suggest you use 4NT as asking for aces. I have actually had a couple of hands where this was a useful treatment. Otherwise, I don't recall ever bidding 4NT after an opening 4♣ or 4♦ bid.

WHEN THEY OPEN WITH 4♥ OR 4♠

Bidding when they open with four of a major is never fun. At least you have a relatively easy road when they bid 4♥. When they bid 4♠, however, you will hate it. Still, if you have understandings, you rate to survive some of the time. One thing you must know is that bidding against 4♥ is not the same as bidding against 4♠. Here are the differences.

BIDDING OVER A 4♥ OPENING BID

Bidding against 4♥ is dangerous but the tools are normal enough.

- If you double 4♥ it is takeout, showing the usual good hand that you need to bid at the four-level.
- If you bid 4♠ or 5♣ or 5♦, you should have a good suit and a good hand.
- If you bid 4NT over 4♥, it shows the minors. You need a good hand with at least 5-5 shape to make this bid.

BIDDING WHEN THEY OPEN 4♠

Your choices are limited. If you bid a suit, you are at the five-level. It is rare that you have a good enough hand to do this. Assume neither side is vulnerable in the following hands.

West	North	East	South
		4♠	?

♠ K 3 ♥ A Q 8 7 4 3 ♦ A 3 ♣ K 9 8

Pass. If your side is to make 5♥, you need partner to show up with 10 or more support points along with a heart fit. This is asking too much. Passing is wise. Many times you will discover that you could have bid but more often than not, you will discover that bidding was wrong.

♠ — ♥ Q J 9 7 6 5 3 ♦ K Q 10 3 ♣ A Q

Bid 5♥. You will go down if partner has nothing good but making 5♥ does not require more than a few points and useful shape. If partner has the ♥10 and the ♦A, you might make 5♥. He can have more. Look at it this way. If you bid 5♥ and partner raises to 6♥, you should feel pretty good about it.

♠ Q 8 ♥ A K J ♦ Q J 8 7 6 5 ♣ A Q

This hand has more high-card points than the previous hand but it has a relatively poor diamond suit, with wasted values in spades. Passing is clearly best. If you find you could have bid and made something, don't be swayed. Learn that preempts are intended to annoy you. They do.

WHEN YOU DOUBLE 4♠

Some players prefer to play that a double of 4♠ is for penalty. If they want to bid a suit, they bid 4NT to ask for partner's suit. This is a very poor method. Of all the bidding methods that have been used for years, this may be the worst.

I strongly suggest this. Play that a double of 4♠ is a takeout double. You lose the penalty double, but you gain when your partner decides to pass your takeout double and play for a penalty instead. You will get more penalties from 4♠ bids if you play double as takeout than you will by using double for business.

West	North	East	South
4♠			?

Here are four hands. Which of these are good enough to double 4♠?

♠ Q J 4 ♥ A Q ♦ A 9 7 5 3 ♣ K J 8

♠ 3 ♥ Q 7 4 3 ♦ K Q 7 3 ♣ A 7 4 3

♠ 4 ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ A Q 10 4

♠ 4 2 ♥ J 7 ♦ A K J 7 ♣ A K 6 5 3

With the first hand you should pass. A double shows takeout values and you have no support for hearts and bad support for clubs. If you use double as penalty you would do that, but it is not a wise treatment.

With the second hand you should pass. You have takeout double shape but if you double, you are committing your side to playing at the five-level.

With the third hand you have enough to double for takeout.

With the fourth hand you should pass. You can't double since partner will bid hearts some of the time and frankly, you need a good hand from partner to make 5♣ or 5♦ if you somehow could bid one of these contracts.

Here are two examples of responding when your partner doubles 4♠.

West	North	East	South
4♠	dbl	pass	?

♠ 9 7 3 ♥ K 10 8 7 4 ♦ J 6 2 ♣ A 8

Bid 5♥. If double is for takeout, you know you can bid 5♥ and expect to make it. You could have a slam, but at least you are getting to a good spot.

♠ 10 6 4 3 ♥ J 10 3 ♦ J 8 3 ♣ Q 8 4

Pass. This is a reminder hand. I talked earlier about what you need to pass your partner's takeout double of 4♠. Which suit would you bid? Even though North is asking you to bid, you can pass and hope to set them a trick. Now consider how your bidding would go in the old method. North would bid 4NT for takeout and you would have to select a suit at the five-level, like it or not.

Doesn't it feel better to double for takeout than to bid 4NT for takeout, which is the method that was used for fifty years? Give the takeout double method a fair trial. It is worth the effort.

THE 4NT BID OVER 4♦

The difference between 4NT after a 4♥ bid and after a 4♦ bid is huge. You do not want to have a misunderstanding about what 4NT shows after 4♥ or 4♦.

4NT over 4♥ shows the minor suits.

4NT over 4♦ is something special. It shows a good two-suited hand with at least 5-5 distribution. Your partner doesn't know which two suits you have, but he can find out. Remember that this is *not* an unusual 4NT overcall. It is similar in that you have two suits, but the two suits are not always the minors. Over 4NT, your partner will bid the lowest suit that he has three-card support for. It is possible that he might have to choose from two-card suits. You will pass if you have support for that suit and you will bid the next suit if you don't like what partner just bid. Here is one complete hand.

West	North	East	South
		4♦	4NT
pass	5♦	pass	5♥
all pass			

♠ 7 6 5 2
♥ K 10 6 3
♦ K 9 6
♣ J 4

♠ 4
♥ A Q J 8 7
♦ 3 2
♣ A K Q 10 7

You have a fine hand that is worth taking a chance at the five-level. Note that you can't afford to bid with weak hands after an opening 4♦ bid. Bidding at the five-level without values is without merit.

Using the approach above, you bid 4NT to show a good two-suited hand. Your partner isn't sure which suits you have, so he bids 5♦. Diamonds is the lowest unbid suit where your partner has three cards. If you have diamonds, you will pass 5♦. On this hand, you have hearts and clubs. Your 5♥ bid says diamonds isn't one of your suits. Your partner now knows you have hearts and clubs and he chooses the one he likes best. Partner is happy to pass 5♥ since he has good support.

I agree this structure isn't easy. But it has too many advantages to ignore. Look at your hand. What would you do if your RHO opened 4♦ and you were using 4NT to show the minors? Or for that matter, what would you do if RHO opened 4♦ and you were using 4NT for takeout? Some players bid 4NT with

both minors and they also bid 4NT as a takeout bid. They expect their partner to know what to do. That's scary stuff. Using 4NT as described here gives you more accuracy because your partner knows exactly what it means when you double or bid 4NT.

Here is an example showing the kind of confusion that can occur. Your RHO opens 4♠ with no one vulnerable. What do you do with this hand?

♠ 8 ♥ A Q J 3 ♦ A K Q 9 ♣ K 10 5 3

This hand wants to make a takeout bid, and using traditional methods that is hard to do. In classic bidding, this hand must bid 4NT to show a takeout double. Clumsy at best. Using the methods I am suggesting you can double, which shows takeout shape with good values. Your partner can bid a suit if he wishes and he can pass if that looks best.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

LHO OPENS WITH A WEAK TWO-BID AND PARTNER DOUBLES

STANDARD BIDDING VS. LEBENSOHL

Responding to a takeout double of a weak two-bid is similar to responding to a takeout double of a one-bid. You need to show your values whenever you can. This means that you make a minimum bid when you have nothing much to say and you jump or cuebid when you have a good hand. I am going to state here that responding when partner doubles a weak two-bid is kind of a random event. Here is why.

Say your partner doubles 2♥ for takeout and the next player passes.

West	North	East	South
2♥	dbl	pass	?

What do you do with these hands?

♠ 10 9 7 5 4 ♥ 8 4 ♦ Q J 4 ♣ 10 5 4

Bid 2♠. Nothing abnormal about this bid.

♠ A J 4 3 ♥ A 3 ♦ J 8 7 5 ♣ 10 9 3

Bid 3♠. You have about 11 support points for spades. With this you need to make an encouraging noise and 3♠ does the trick. Note that you have just four spades.

♠ A J 4 3 2 ♥ A 3 ♦ J 8 7 ♣ 10 9 3

Bid 3♠. This is almost the same hand as the previous hand except that it has five spades. It would be nice if you could tell partner how many spades you have.

♠ 8 3 ♥ 10 8 3 ♦ Q 8 4 ♣ J 8 7 5 4

Bid 3♣. This is a bad hand but at least you have a five-card suit. It could be worse.

♠ K 8 ♥ 10 7 4 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ A Q 8 7 4

Bid 3♣. This time you have a good hand for your 3♣ bid. It would be nice if you could tell partner that on this hand you have something for your 3♣ bid while letting partner know when you have a bad hand like the previous hand.

♠ K 8 ♥ Q J 4 ♦ K J 7 6 5 ♣ Q 9 5

Bid 3NT. You pretty much want to bid 3NT even though you have a minimum.

♠ K 8 ♥ K J 4 ♦ K Q 7 4 ♣ K J 4 2

Bid 3NT. You more or less have to bid 3NT with this hand, too. You would like to have a way to tell partner that you have a minimum 3NT bid versus a nice 3NT bid. If they had not opened with that weak two-bid you would have ways to show different kinds of hand ranges. The rest of this chapter will show you a tool that will help you with many of the problems above.

THE LEBENSOHL CONVENTION

The Lebensohl convention is used after your side doubles a weak two-bid.

A player one day found himself in this situation:

West	North	East	South
		2♥	dbl
pass	3♦	pass	?

♠ A K J 7 ♥ 8 5 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ K J 6 4

South didn't know whether it was safe to keep bidding. If North had a lousy hand with 2 or 3 points and a poor diamond suit, it was possible that 3♦ was already too high.

♠ 8 4 3 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ 9 8 5 4 3 ♣ Q 7

If this is partner's hand, 3♦ is likely to go down. If diamonds divide 4-1, not unexpected after the preempt, 3♦ might go down a lot.

♠ Q 4 3 ♥ K 10 4 ♦ K 9 5 4 3 ♣ 9 7

If this is partner's hand, 3NT might be cold. There could be four spades and five diamonds and perhaps another trick in hearts or clubs. Making 3NT with an overtrick is probable.

The big question is how does South know what to do after partner's 3♦ bid. In fact, using normal bidding, South has no way of knowing.

HOW DOES LEBENSOHL WORK?

This is where Lebensohl comes in. It works this way.

Case One: Your partner doubles and you can respond in a suit at the two-level

When your partner makes a takeout double of a weak two-bid, a response at the two-level shows a hand from 0 to 8 or 9 points that is not suitable for a stronger bid. Some examples:

West	North	East	South
2♦	dbl	pass	?
<p>♠ Q 8 7 ♥ 10 8 7 4 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ 9 5 4</p>			

Bid 2♥. Bids at the two-level have nothing to do with Lebensohl. Bids at the two-level only show a suit, they do not promise points. Just like when your partner doubles 1♦, you may end up bidding 1♥ or 1♣ with no points at all.

♠ Q 9 8 4 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ 8 4 ♣ K J 7 5

Bid 2♣. This time you have something, relatively, but not enough to be proud of it.

♠ 9 ♥ K 7 6 4 3 ♦ J 8 7 4 ♣ Q 8 4

Bid 2♥. Now you are beginning to have a hand. You have 6 HCP and some shape and you have a five-card suit.

Case Two: Your partner doubles a weak two and you have to bid your suit at the three-level

Lebensohl comes into use when your partner doubles and the suit you are going to bid is lower-ranking than their suit, meaning that you have to bid it at the three-level.

When you have a poor or terrible hand

If you have a weak hand, in the range of 0 to 8 support points (always remember to use your judgment), you bid 2NT.

What does 2NT say?

A 2NT response to a double of a weak two-bid tells partner you have a suit that has to be bid at the three-level and that you do not like your hand. It may be that you have something else in mind, but that is your partner's first thought.

Let's say they opened 2♠ and your partner doubles for takeout. You bid 2NT.

Your partner is instructed to bid 3♣. You will pass 3♣ if you have a weak hand with clubs.

If you have a weak hand with diamonds, you will bid 3♦, which your partner will usually pass.

If you have a weak hand with hearts, you will bid 3♥, which your partner will usually pass.

Some examples of this situation follow. Assume neither side is vulnerable.

West	North	East	South
2♠	dbl	pass	?

♠ 10 7 5 4 ♥ Q 7 6 3 ♦ Q 4 3 ♣ 9 8

Bid 2NT. This is artificial and says nothing about having a stopper in their suit.

Your partner must bid 3♣ (he has other options but only if he has a monster hand). When he bids 3♣, you will bid 3♥. Your partner is expected to pass this. Certainly that is fine with you since this is a pretty bad hand. The nice thing about this bidding is that your partner now knows you have no interest in your hand. Note that you have two queens. Partner will expect you to have 0 points to a bad 8 so this hand is kind of in the middle of your range.

♠ 8 6 4 ♥ 7 4 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ 9 5 4 3 2

Bid 2NT. Your partner will bid 3♣ and you will pass. This is not as bad as it might be. You have five clubs and you have some helpful diamond honors.

♠ A 7 3 ♥ Q J 7 5 ♦ 7 4 3 ♣ 9 4 2

Bid 2NT. Your hand is starting to have some flavor to it. You have 7 useful points but you are balanced and you have only a four-card suit. When partner bids 3♣, you will bid 3♥. This is about as good a hand as you will have when you respond 2NT and then bid a suit.

When you have something good

If you have a hand that is worth something, a hand with a suit in the range of 9 to 11 support points, you bid the suit.

West	North	East	South
2♥	dbl	pass	?
♠ A J 3 ♥ 10 5 4 ♦ 5 4 ♣ Q J 9 5 3			

Finally, a hand with some quality. Bid 3♣. When you bid a suit lower ranking than opener's suit at the three-level, you show in the range of 9 to 11 support points. This hand has 8 HCP but they are decent points. Also, you have some shape and you have a nice five-card suit. Never forget that fifth card in your suit. If you have played in some 4-3 fits before, you will appreciate how much better it is to have a 4-4 or a 5-3 fit. Your 3♣ bid is invitational only. Your partner is allowed to pass. Do not bid a new suit with too good a hand.

♠ 8 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ A Q 9 8 4 ♣ K J 9 5

Bid 3♦. This is a maximum hand for this bid. You have close to 12 support points.

♠ A Q J 5 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ K J 4 ♣ 10 9 8

This hand is too good for 3♣. I suggest bidding 4♣ and expecting it to have a play.

THREE OPTIONAL LEBENSOHL BIDDING TRICKS

Optional Lebensohl trick one

When your partner doubles a weak two-bid and you have invitational values with hearts or spades, there is a way to tell partner how many cards you have in your suit.

This trick works only when your suit is higher-ranking than opener's suit.

- When you have an invitational hand with a five-card major: jump in the major.
- When you have an invitational hand with a four-card major: bid 2NT, Lebensohl. Your partner will bid 3♣ and you will now bid your major at the three-level.

Note that for the following examples your side is sitting East-West.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
2NT	pass	3♣	pass
3♥	pass	pass	pass
♠ 10 5 4 ♥ K Q 8 5 ♦ 9 6 4 3 ♣ K J	N W E S	♠ K Q 7 6 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A 10 5 4 3	

Using the Lebensohl trick shown above, West bids 2NT, getting 3♣ from East. West now bids 3♥, announcing an invitational hand with only four hearts. East has three hearts and declines to raise since he knows the partnership is thin on trumps.

If West had a bad hand with hearts he would bid 2♥ instead of going through the 2NT sequence.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
3♥	pass	4♥	pass
pass	pass		
♠ 10 5 4 ♥ K Q 8 5 3 ♦ 6 4 3 ♣ K J	N W E S	♠ K Q 7 6 ♥ A 7 4 ♦ 5 ♣ A 10 5 4 3	

West's jump to 3♥ shows invitational values with five hearts. Knowing West has five hearts gives East enough reason to bid game.

Optional Lebensohl trick two

When your partner doubles a weak two-bid, you will sometimes have a good hand that wants to make a forcing bid. You might have a game-going hand with one suit. You might have a game-forcing hand with both majors (when they open 2♦). Basically, when you have a good hand that does not have an easy bid, you may need a bid that lets you tell partner you have something really good. The way to do that is to cuebid their suit. There are two ways to do this when using Lebensohl.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
3♦			

Here, East doubles a weak 2♦ bid and West bids 3♦ directly.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
2NT	pass	3♣	pass
3♦			

Here, responder uses the Lebensohl 2NT bid and then cuebids their suit.

Two ways to do the same thing. What should the difference be?

Here is one possibility. If you can think of other possible treatments, feel free to try them. My idea is this:

- An immediate cuebid asks for notrump.

If you make an immediate cuebid, you are asking partner to bid notrump if he can. You typically have a long, running minor suit for this bid.

- A delayed cuebid asks partner to show suits. Kind of like Stayman.

If you first bid 2NT and then cuebid their suit, you are looking for a major suit. It is likely that you have both major suits, although that is not guaranteed.

Here are a couple of examples of cuebidding immediately:

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
3♦			

♠ 7 4 ♥ K 4 3 ♦ 7 3 ♣ A Q 10 7 6 4

West can bid 3♣ with this to show a decent hand, but this hand is more than decent. It has six likely club winners and it has the ♥K. By cuebidding their suit, you announce that you are interested in 3NT. The hand you have here is typical.

♠ K 4 3 ♥ A Q 3 ♦ 7 4 ♣ K Q 7 5 4

Perhaps you can bid the same way with this hand. Asking for 3NT is something you will often want to do, and this is one way to do it.

Here are some examples where responder bids 2NT and then makes a cuebid:

West	North	East	South
	2♥	dbl	pass
2NT	pass	3♣	pass
3♥			

♠ A J 4 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ K Q 7 4 ♣ A Q 7

This is a fine hand that might find a slam. Over partner's double, you are stuck for a bid since no single bid shows this nice a hand. Bid 2NT. Your partner will bid 3♣ and you will then bid 3♥, hoping to sort it out. I make no claims that the auction will be easy but at least you have established that you have an excellent hand. Your partner will treat your bid as a form of Stayman for the moment. Note that your partner can still choose to bid notrump if he wishes.

♠ A Q J 8 4 3 ♥ A 4 ♦ K 4 3 ♣ 5 4

This hand is too good to bid 4♣. Start with 2NT. Then emphasize the spades. Again, you need to appreciate that their preempt has made life hard on you. Accept that. Here is a possible sequence.

West	North	East	South
	2♥	dbl	pass
2NT	pass	3♣	pass
3♥	pass	4♣	pass
4♠	pass	pass	pass

♠ A Q J 8 4 3
♥ A 4
♦ K 4 3
♣ 5 4



♠ K 10 7
♥ 9 5
♦ A 10 8 5
♣ A Q J 2

First, observe that bidding when they open a preempt is not fun. If your side got to open the bidding it would be less difficult. The important thing here is that West does not bid 4♣ immediately. He has too much. West starts by bidding 2NT first. If East had four spades he would bid them, and life would be fairly easy. But East doesn't have spades and he can't bid notrump, so he bids 4♣. West now bids 4♣. At this point East knows that West has a very good hand with spades, with slam interest. On this hand East would pass 4♣. If East had more, he would find some way to express that.

Optional Lebensohl trick three

Some of the time you have a hand interested in bidding 3NT. Lebensohl lets you tell partner when you have a modest hand and when you have a genuine hand.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
3NT			

Here, your partner doubles a weak 2♦ bid and you bid 3NT directly.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
2NT	pass	3♣	pass
3NT			

Here, you used the Lebensohl 2NT bid and then you bid 3NT.

Two ways to get to 3NT. What should the difference be?

- I suggest that bidding 3NT directly shows 14 to 16 points.
- I suggest that bidding 2NT and then 3NT shows 11 to 13 points.
- If responder has more than 16 points, he might bid 2NT and then bid 4NT. That would be quantitative too.

Why do it this way? No particular reason. The main idea is that you at least have a way to show your intentions. Given the raunchy quality of opponents' weak two-bids today, you may have a slam. Having a way to let partner know when you have a minimum 3NT hand and when you have a good 3NT hand is nice.

EXAMPLES

Following are examples of auctions where partner doubles a weak two-bid. I will include a discussion of Lebensohl if it is an appropriate choice.

These examples will start with responding to a double of a weak 2♦ bid and will go up through responding to a double of a 3♣ bid. Judgment counts for a lot in these cases. I am going to show partial auctions with both hands in view. For these examples I am showing the opening preempt coming from North. East will make his double and West will make his response. Assume neither side is vulnerable on these hands.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
2♠	pass	pass	pass
♠ J 10 8 2 ♥ Q 4 ♦ 9 6 ♣ Q 8 7 5 3	N W E S	♠ A Q 4 3 ♥ K 9 7 5 ♦ 7 2 ♣ A J 4	

Nothing odd here at all. East has a nice double and West bids his spades instead of his clubs because bidding a major is generally preferable. East doesn't have enough to continue.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
?			
♠ 8 3 ♥ 7 2 ♦ 9 6 5 4 2 ♣ K 10 9 5	N W E S	♠ Q 5 4 2 ♥ A K Q 8 ♦ 8 ♣ A 8 7 2	

East doubles 2♦ and West has to find a bid. Passing with five little diamonds is not a winning strategy. On this hand North is likely to take six diamond tricks and two spades.

If you are not using Lebensohl, West has to bid 3♣ directly, which East should pass.

If using Lebehsohl, West bids 2NT asking East to bid 3♣, which West passes. The main point of this hand is that Lebensohl does apply when your partner doubles a weak 2♦ bid.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
3♥	pass	4♥	pass
pass	pass		
♠ J 8 ♥ Q 9 6 5 3 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ A Q 5	N W E S	♠ A 7 6 ♥ K J 7 4 ♦ A 2 ♣ K 7 4 3	

If you are not using Lebehsohl, West would bid 3♥, invitational. East has a fair hand with four trumps and good shape, and is happy to bid game.

If you are using Lebensohl, West would also bid 3♥ but he is known to have five hearts because he bid 3♥ directly. He did not go through the 2NT routine before bidding his hearts.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
?			

♠ K 9 8 3	W	N	E
♥ K 10 8			
♦ 9 6 2	S		
♣ K J 4			

♠ A J 4			
♥ Q 9 3 2			
♦ K 5			
♣ A 9 8 3			

If not using Lebensohl, West would bid 3♠. His shape is bad but his high-card points are excellent. If you are using traditional methods, East can't tell how many spades West has. East would be uncertain about whether to bid game or not.

If using Lebensohl, West bids 2NT, which gets East to bid 3♣, and then bids 3♠. This sequence tells East that West has invitational values with only four spades. East will be happy to pass 3♠.

West	North	East	South
	2♦	dbl	pass
?			

♠ 10 5 3	W	N	E
♥ K 8			
♦ Q J 7 3	S		
♣ A Q 6 4			

♠ A Q J 7			
♥ A J 6 5			
♦ K 2			
♣ K 5 3			

If not using Lebensohl, West will bid 3NT, showing a hand that wants to be in 3NT. East may or may not pass. He could be excused for bidding again. Remember that West can have all kinds of hands when he bids 3NT when not using Lebensohl. West could have enough for slam.

If using Lebensohl, West will bid 2NT, asking for 3♣. East will bid 3♣ with his hand. He does not have enough to raise to 3NT since West is likely to have a bad hand. West now bids 3NT. This shows a minimum hand for 3NT and East will pass, knowing West does not have the needed 15 points for slam. If West had 14 to 16 points he would bid 3NT directly, showing a good hand for 3NT.

West	North	East	South
	2♥	dbl	pass
?			
♠ 9 4 ♥ Q 4 3 ♦ J 10 7 5 3 ♣ J 10 6		♠ K 10 5 2 ♥ A K ♦ 9 4 2 ♣ A 5 4 3	

If not using Lebensohl, West bids 3♦, which does not tell East very much. On this hand East would pass so nothing much is gained or lost. 3♦ happens to be a poor contract. Note that North opened 2♥ on a crummy suit. This happens a lot now.

If using Lebensohl, West bids 2NT and when East bids 3♣, West bids 3♦.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	dbl	pass
?			
♠ Q 9 8 7 5 ♥ A 4 ♦ Q 9 4 ♣ J 6 4		♠ 6 ♥ K Q 10 6 ♦ A 10 7 3 ♣ K 9 5 2	

West has an awkward hand. I remind you that bidding against 2♠ is tougher than bidding against other weak two-bids. What West does on this hand is all about judgment. It has nothing to do with system.

I suggest that West pass 2♠ doubled. He ought to have two spade tricks and if East happens to have a spade honor, very possible, West may have three defensive tricks in spades plus his ♥A and pushers in the minors. One additional reason for passing is that West does not have a happy bid to make otherwise. Since setting 2♠ doubled is possible, that looks to be the best chance for a plus score.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	dbl	pass
?			
♠ 9 7 4 ♥ 7 5 3 ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ J 7 5 2		♠ A 10 ♥ A Q 9 6 ♦ K Q J 8 ♣ A 10 4	

In traditional methods, West bids 3♣ and East bids 3NT.

Using Lebensohl West bids 2NT, asking East to bid 3♣. East has so much that he is unwilling to play in 3♣. He bids 3NT and offers a wish that West has a few points. West does not have a few points and 3NT will be an impossible contract. These things happen.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	dbl	pass
3♦	pass	3♥	pass
4♥	pass	pass	pass

♠ 7 5 4			♠ 9 2
♥ J 4			♥ A K Q 7 3
♦ K 9 8 7 5			♦ A Q 6
♣ J 10 4			♣ A 9 5

This auction shows traditional bidding. West responds 3♦ and East bids 3♥, showing his double is based on an 18- or 19-point hand. West has some scattered points with two decent hearts. He raises to game.

If using Lebensohl, West would bid 2NT, hoping to bid 3♦ when East bids 3♣. East does not wish to risk playing in 3♣ so he would bid 3♥, showing a big hand with hearts. West would go on to game. This hand would reach 4♥ with or without Lebensohl.

West	North	East	South
	2♥	dbl	pass
?			

♠ 9 5			♠ A J 10 8
♥ 8 5 4			♥ K 2
♦ K Q 8 7 4			♦ A J 3
♣ J 5 4			♣ K 10 8 3

Note the East hand. If his partner bids 3♦ in traditional methods, East won't be sure if 3NT might make. He would have a guess.

With Lebensohl, West would bid 2NT, East would bid 3♣, and West would bid 3♦. Now East can pass, knowing there is no game worth bidding.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	dbl	pass
4♥	pass	pass	pass
♠ 3 2 ♥ Q J 8 7 5 4 ♦ K 7 ♣ K 9 3		N W E S	♠ 10 7 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ A 10 8 5 ♣ A Q J 8

West has too much playing strength to bid just 3♥. He bids 4♥, which means East does not have to guess what to do if West bids just 3♥.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	dbl	pass
?			
♠ J 10 5 3 ♥ 4 ♦ A J 5 ♣ Q 10 9 8 7		N W E S	♠ 9 2 ♥ A K 7 3 ♦ K 10 8 3 ♣ A K J

Traditional methods would leave East guessing. He would double and West would bid 3♣, and East would not be sure if he had enough to bid again.

Using Lebensohl methods, West makes a positive response of 3♣. East knows that West has 8 to 10 points, give or take, and expects there is a game if West can stop spades. East bids 3♠, which usually turns out to be asking for notrump. West has a stopper and bids 3NT. Note that West is not worried about hearts. He expects East to have those.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	dbl	pass
2NT	pass	3♦	pass
3♠	pass	5♦	pass
pass	pass		
♠ 5 3 2 ♥ K 3 ♦ Q 5 4 ♣ 9 7 6 3 2		N W E S	♠ 6 ♥ A Q 9 5 ♦ A K J 9 7 3 ♣ A 5

For this hand, I am showing only a Lebensohl auction. It is tricky but logical. East doubles 2♠ and West bids 2NT, trying to escape to 3♣. East does not like

clubs but he has a big hand with unexpected intentions. East bids 3♦, a natural bid. This shows a hand that is so good that he wanted to double and then show his suit. A 3♦ overcall would not have done this hand justice. 3♦ is not forcing, just highly invitational.

West should realize that his little hand is full of good stuff. He should bid something. Here he bids 3♣, asking for 3NT. West knows his ♦Q and ♥K are important cards. East can't bid notrump but he expects that West has something useful and he bids 5♦.

WHEN THEY OPEN WITH A WEAK TWO-BID AND PARTNER DOUBLES IN THE BALANCING SEAT

Is Lebensohl on or off? Here are three auctions. They are different. Do you see how they are different?

West	North	East	South
		2♠	pass
pass	dbl	pass	?
West	North	East	South
	pass	2♠	pass
pass	dbl	pass	?
West	North	East	South
pass	pass	2♠	pass
pass	dbl	pass	?

In the first auction, your RHO opened in first seat. 2♠ was passed to your partner and he doubled.

In the second auction, your partner passed and your RHO opened in second seat. 2♠ was passed to your partner and he doubled.

In the third auction, your LHO and partner passed and your RHO opened in third seat. 2♠ was passed to your partner and he doubled.

When RHO opens in first seat and your partner doubles, he can have a balancing double all the way up to 20 or more points.

When RHO opens in second or third seat and your partner doubles, you know he is a passed hand and cannot have more than 11 HCP. He can have less if he has shape.

I suggest the following: When your partner is not a passed hand, you use Lebensohl as described above.

When partner is a passed hand, you do not use Lebensohl. Facing a passed hand, your side is not likely to have a game. I suggest you revert to simple bidding in this case.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

LHO OPENS WITH A WEAK THREE-BID AND PARTNER DOUBLES

WHEN THEY OPEN WITH A WEAK THREE-BID AND PARTNER DOUBLES

You have to rely on judgment. Those distinctions that you were able to make with Levensohl do not exist. Your side can use the Rule of 7 to help you but it is only a help, not an answer. The Rule of 7 says that you can double (or bid something) if your hand is good enough that all you need is 7 points from partner to make it safe for you to bid.

RESPONDING TO PARTNER'S DOUBLE OF A THREE-BID

Here are some questions and observations on responding to partner's double of a weak three-bid. Neither side is vulnerable.

West	North	East	South
3♦	dbl	pass	?

♠ Q 9 8 7 ♥ 8 4 ♦ 8 7 5 ♣ 8 7 5 4

Bid 3♠. You do not have a way to tell partner when you have 0 points and when you have 8 or 9.

♠ 6 4 3 ♥ 10 8 5 ♦ J 8 4 ♣ K 10 7 4

Bid 4♣. Another awful hand. When you are the doubler and your partner makes a simple response, remember these first two hands.

♠ Q J 8 7 5 ♥ K 5 4 ♦ 10 4 ♣ 7 4 3

Bid 3♠. You are entitled to be pleased with what you do have, which includes a five-card major and high cards in the majors. But you can't do more than bid 3♠. Note that a doubleton diamond is worse than a singleton diamond or three small diamonds. Your partner could have two and when you also have two, it is a bad sign.

♠ K 10 8 7 4 ♥ 8 ♦ A 4 3 ♣ J 8 7 4

Bid **4♠**. If the opening bid had been **2♦** and your partner doubled, you could jump to **3♠** to show this hand. When they open with a three-bid you do not have an invitational bid. You bid three or you bid four. Here, you have a fifth spade, an ace, shape, and the ♣J. Adds up to 11 support points. This is 4 more points than your partner is expecting (hoping for). Bid game.

♠ 9 5 4 ♥ K 8 ♦ Q J 8 4 ♣ 8 6 5 3

Pass. Players are opening really lousy preempts now, and dealer may be out of line. Since your only unbid four-card suit is a bad minor and since you have to bid it at the four-level, it is reasonable to pass and hope to beat them.

While I do not promise you that you will always set them three tricks when you do this, that is what happened on this hand. I was the doubler and my partner held this hand and passed. Opener had preempted on ♦K107653, and he paid a price for it.

♠ Q 10 5 4 ♥ 10 9 7 4 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ A K

A fair hand. With both majors and with 9 good HCP and with useful tens in the major suits you can bid **4♦**, asking partner to bid a major. This may be a little high but you are making sure that you play in the proper major.

♠ Q 7 5 4 ♥ 9 7 5 4 ♦ 9 4 ♣ J 9 5

You have both majors but you have a bad hand. Bid **3♥** and hope the bidding ends here. You may be in the wrong major but at least you are not higher.

♠ K 5 3 ♥ Q J 7 ♦ 9 8 4 2 ♣ K J 6

This hand comes from a bidding panel loaded with experts. They all lamented that they hated to bid against preempts. Almost all of them voted for passing. They felt that bidding a suit was not a safe thing to do, stating that they did not want to play in a 3-3 fit. Definitely possible. They felt that with their high cards, setting **3♦** was more likely than making something their way. This is the way experienced players are thinking today and that view is based largely on the fact that people are making more and more aggressive preempts.

♠ J 7 4 ♥ 9 8 3 ♦ 10 6 4 ♣ 7 6 5 3

You have seen some bad hands and some good hands in this section. This one is the worst. The only way it could be more revolting than this is if it had four little diamonds and three clubs. What should you bid?

I don't know. No one else does either.

You can pass and expect them to make 3♦ doubled, perhaps with an overtrick. That would be worth 570 to their side.

You can bid 3♥, a scary bid that has the small redemption of keeping the bidding at the three-level. Your opponents may double this. But that is not the only danger. Your partner may decide to bid again. This might cost you 800 or 1100.

You could respond 4♣. But do you really think this will be better? The idea of passing 3♦ and giving them 570 or so may turn out to be the best possible result. As I said. This nightmare is out there.

♠ 9 4 ♥ 6 3 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ A Q 7 6 5 3

Bid 3NT. You usually have six club tricks here. If you are missing the king, it is likely to be with East. You can bid 4♣ safely, but that is only putting you in contention for a partscore.

A few examples of how the Rule of 7 guides your bidding. Note you are East-West.

West	North	East	South
	3♦	dbl	pass
3♠	pass	4♣	pass
pass	pass		

West
♠ J 8 7 4
♥ 4 3
♦ K 7 4
♣ 10 7 4 3

North

East

South
♠ K Q 6 2
♥ K Q 8 5
♦ 8 5
♣ A K J

N
W E
S

West bid 3♠ in response to East's takeout double. When East doubles a three-level preempt, there are no Lebensohl implications. West's 3♠ bid may be made with a 0-point hand up to some 8-point hands. This West hand has only 1 working point.

East has 19 support points and is entitled to wish that West has something. If West has any ace and the ♣Q, game is possible. There is no perfection on auctions like this one. The result of East's 4♣ bid is probably down one or two.

West	North	East	South
	3♦	dbl	pass
3♠	pass	4♠	pass
pass	pass		
♠ 10 7 5 4 3 ♥ A 6 3 ♦ 4 ♣ Q 7 4 2		N W E S	♠ K Q 6 2 ♥ K Q 8 5 ♦ 8 5 ♣ A K J

Here is the same auction and the same East hand. This time West has a maximum 3♠ bid. If East spends time worrying that West will have another bad hand, he will pass 3♠ and West will take ten or eleven tricks. East has to continue as before by bidding 4♠. This will make often enough that it is worth bidding.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN SOME NEW SCIENCE VERSUS PREEMPTS

In recent years, the science of bidding has made some advances. One of them is a convention called Leaping Michaels. It is based on normal Michaels.

Here is how normal Michaels works. I talked about this convention earlier.

- 2♦ - 3♦ Shows the majors. This is the basic form of Michaels.
- 2♥ - 3♥ Asks partner if he has a stopper in their suit for 3NT.
- 2♣ - 3♣ Asks partner if he has a stopper in their suit for 3NT.

What this means is that you do not have a Michaels bid available when your RHO opens with two of a major. There is a solution of sorts.

LEAPING MICHAELS AGAINST WEAK TWO-BIDS IN A MAJOR

If your RHO opens two of a major and you have a Michaels hand with five cards in the unbid major and five cards in a minor and a good enough hand to be at the four-level, you can show your hand by bidding four of your minor.

This is more easily demonstrated by examples than by discussion. Assume neither side is vulnerable. For these examples, you are East and West.

West	North	East	South
	2♥	4♣	
♠ 3 2 ♥ Q 8 ♦ K 8 7 3 ♣ K 7 4 3 2	N W E S	♠ A Q 10 6 4 ♥ 7 ♦ A 4 ♣ A Q 10 8 5	

East bids 4♣ over 2♥, which shows a good hand with clubs and the unbid major, spades. Some play that this bid is forcing to game. I am not so sure. I believe that if responder (West) has a dreadful hand, he can stop short of game by passing East's bid.

West isn't sure how good his hand will be for partner but he does have five clubs to the king and some possibly useful values on the side. West has an easy raise to game. Note that West's hand is pretty good. Slam only requires the spade finesse.

West	North	East	South
	2♠	4♦	4♠
pass	pass	?	
♠ 10 8 3 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ Q J 5 4 2		♠ 6 ♥ K Q 9 8 4 ♦ A K J 6 2 ♣ K 3	

West passes 4♠. Importantly, when the bidding gets back to East, East knows that West did not want to bid. East knows enough to pass and defend rather than bid again. If East had overcalled 3♥ and South then bid 4♣, East would likely continue bidding with 5♦ since he would still have some hopes. Because he used the 4♦ bid, which showed his hand, he learned that West had nothing in time to use that information. Passing it out in 4♠ is a good idea. East-West can't make much and in fact, 4♠ may go down.

LEAPING MICHAELS AGAINST WEAK THREE-BIDS IN A MAJOR

You can use these same methods against an opening three-of-a-major bid too. The bids have the same meaning as they do against a weak two-bid. The difference is that after a weak two-bid, you jump to four of a minor. When bidding against a three-level major-suit preempt, you just bid four of a minor to show that minor and the other major.

West	North	East	South
	3♠	4♦	pass
5♦	pass	pass	pass
♠ 9 3 2 ♥ 6 2 ♦ K 10 3 ♣ A 7 6 4 3		♠ A 6 ♥ K Q 10 7 5 ♦ A Q J 8 7 ♣ 2	

This is not perfect but 5♦ has a play. If East is not using this convention, he might try 4♥ and that will fail badly. The fact is that this hand is hard to bid. The important thing is that East and West found a way to get to diamonds, not hearts.

West	North	East	South
	3♠	4♣	pass
pass	pass		
♠ Q 9 3 2			♠ 6
♥ 6			♥ K Q 10 7 5
♦ Q 9 7 4 3			♦ A 8
♣ 9 7 4			♣ A Q J 10 6



West has a lousy hand and he exercises his right to pass. I agree that if East has an extreme hand, 5♣ might make. But that is too rich for my way of thinking. West should not play for miracles. He should assume East has a good hand and if good is not good enough, then stopping is okay.

This bidding method has some advantages and some disadvantages. It always gets you to the best suit, although as on the hand above, it may get you too high. Mostly, the contracts you reach will be as good as you can hope for.

A disadvantage is that you cannot bid 4♣ or 4♦ over 3♥ or 3♠ as a natural bid. If RHO opens 3♠ and you have a hand like the following, you are out of luck if you are playing the version of Michaels I am showing here. Here is your nightmare hand:

♠ 5 3 ♥ A K 3 ♦ 2 ♣ A Q J 10 8 7 4

You can't bid 4♣ because your partner will expect you to have hearts too. You could bid 5♣ but that is obviously a big overbid. As they say, you choose your weapons and hope they are the ones that will work.

LEAPING MICHAELS WHEN THEY RESPOND 2NT TO A MAJOR-SUIT WEAK TWO-BID

West	North	East	South
	2♠	pass	2NT
?			

♠ 5 ♥ A Q 10 7 5 ♦ 2 ♣ K Q J 9 7 5

Bid 4♣. It is amazing. Someone comes up with a convention. They publish a one-page manuscript about it in a magazine and it either sprouts or dies. Frequently a convention stewes on someone's convention card until a problem comes along. Minds get to work and the next thing you know, there is a book on that convention. The hand here shows how a little convention can grow. If

you use Leaping Michaels when your RHO opens with two of a major, you can also use the convention when your RHO bids 2NT in response to 2♥ or 2♠. West uses that bid here. His 4♣ bid shows clubs and the unbid major, which in this case is hearts. West has the needed good hand to risk getting into the bidding at the four- or five-level, and the one he has here is barely average.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

BALANCING DOUBLES

INTRODUCTION TO BALANCING DOUBLES

Balancing doubles occur when the opponents bid and stop at a low level. You may decide to reopen the bidding in the hopes of:

1. Pushing them higher.
2. Getting a penalty if partner has the right hand.
3. Getting to a makeable spot. Getting to a good game is possible.
4. Going down a small amount yourself, which is better than having them make a partscore.

I wrote an entire book on balancing. *The Complete Book on Balancing*, which I refer you to. The second edition is way expanded over the original version. In this section, I will give you a hand or two to show what kind of values are expected. The rest is available for the curious to research. These are sequences I will touch on here:

- The balancing takeout double when LHO opens with a one-bid and RHO passes.
- The balancing takeout double when the opponents bid and raise.
- The balancing takeout double when the opponents bid and don't find a fit.
- The balancing penalty double when the opponents end up in 1NT.
- The balancing takeout double when LHO opens with a preempt and RHO passes.

THE BALANCING DOUBLE WHEN LHO OPENS AND RHO PASSES

In the world of balancing, you will balance frequently when a one-bid is passed to you. Getting to game is possible and winning a partscore fight is both likely and important.

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	pass	?

♦ 8 ♥ J 8 7 3 ♦ K J 5 3 2 ♣ A 9 3

Double. When a one-bid is passed to you, you can double with some very light hands. However, you must have takeout double shape if you are weak. Hopefully, your partner will have the points to go with your distribution. You could double without one of the jacks if you wished.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	pass	?

♦ A K J ♥ 7 3 ♦ A Q J 4 3 ♣ K 3 2

Double. The main question regarding a balancing takeout double is how weak it can be. If you double an opening bid made on your right, you typically need a minimum of 11 good HCP with excellent shape. As your shape gets worse, your high-card requirements go higher and higher.

The upper range for a balancing takeout double is unlimited. This hand has 18 HCP. It could be more. Your intention is to double and then try to sort out your extra values. The correct handling of a good hand like this is something that I do not have room for in this book. Still, the realization of what is needed to double is a good start.

THE BALANCING DOUBLE WHEN THE OPPONENTS BID AND RAISE

You will balance aggressively when RHO bids a suit and LHO raises. If this is passed to you, you should expect to balance. If they are allowed to play in their contract, it is likely to be the best one they can find. Defending when they are in their best contract is not good for you.

Since they have a fit, you rate to have a fit.

Since they stopped at the two-level, your side rates to have half of the high cards, on average.

Fighting for a partscore is very rewarding.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
2♦	pass	pass	?

♠ K 8 2 ♥ Q 9 7 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ K J 7 2

Even this hand is not minimum for a takeout double when the opponents bid and raise. When they have a fit, it means they are happy with their contract. You don't get many matchpoints by letting the opponents play in a contract they enjoy so there isn't a lot of risk when you bid. You need correct shape to double back in with a powder puff hand. This hand is okay, but it would be better to have a 4-4-1-4 shape.

THE BALANCING DOUBLE WHEN THE OPPONENTS BID AND DO NOT FIND A FIT

Other auctions won't be as tempting and again, I refer you to my balancing book for an extensive discussion on the extreme world of reopening.

When the opponents bid back and forth and can't find a fit, a reopening double by you is usually takeout. I suggest you be careful about bidding. Look at your hand and see if there is a good reason to bid. Do not bid just because it is your turn. You will bid some of the time but it must also be a cautious action. Auctions like this are suspect to balance against.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	1♠	pass
2♥	pass	pass	?

♠ 10 6 2 ♥ K 7 ♦ K J 8 7 ♣ K 7 3 2

Pass. They are not necessarily happy with this contract. West could have six so-so hearts and East one or none. Aside from having to go to the three-level, this sequence is the kind that you should leave alone. Learning *when* to balance is possibly the most important aspect of balancing.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	pass
1NT	pass	2♦	pass
2♥	pass	pass	?

♠ Q 8 7 6 ♥ K 9 ♦ 9 3 2 ♣ A J 4 3

On this sequence, they have had a preference auction. They probably have five hearts opposite two. North has four of them. This suggests you think twice before bidding. If you must bid something, go ahead and double, but don't be surprised if North has no four-card suit to bid.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	pass
1♥	pass	2♦	pass
2♥	pass	pass	?

♠ K J 4 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K Q 6 3 ♣ Q 9 3

Pass. The same problem exists. Double would be for takeout, but it would be a suicidal action. You have only one real suit to offer and you have no reason to expect support. When they have not found a fit, the chances are they will be unhappy with their contract. Don't fight for something you don't want.

THE REOPENING PENALTY DOUBLE WHEN THE OPPONENTS END UP IN 1NT

When the opponents bid and bid and bid and end up in 1NT, you should not use takeout doubles in the reopening seat. If they have looked for a fit and haven't found one, it is likely that you don't have much of a fit either. Bridge is funny that way. The better their hands fit, the better your hands fit. Conversely, the worse their hands fit, the worse your hands fit. If they can't find a fit, it is unlikely you have one. Why look for something that probably does not exist?

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

♠ Q 4 ♥ K Q J 8 7 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ A J 10

If a takeout double isn't going to work very often, then perhaps you should use double for something else. The answer is to use double as penalty. It says you

have a decent hand that couldn't bid earlier. The usual reason you couldn't bid is that you have length and strength in one or both of their suits. On this hand, you can double. This is for penalty and strongly suggests partner lead dummy's suit. On this hand you would love to see partner lead the ♡10. With a heart lead and with the few points in partner's hand that you can anticipate, you should set 1NT a couple of tricks. This double comes with no guarantees, but it does have good references.

ASIDE

The balancing 2♣ bid when the opponents bid to 1NT and it is passed to you: If you are in the reopening seat on the auction above and you have a hand that absolutely calls for a takeout double, you can use the 2♣ convention against dead notrumps. Here is one example, using the auction above. Many more examples and a longer discussion can be found in my revised book on balancing.

♠ Q J 8 4 ♥ A 7 2 ♦ 3 ♣ Q J 10 7 4

If you use the 2♣ convention when they have bid two suits on the way to 1NT, you can bid 2♣ with this hand. It is totally artificial. It says you have the two unbid suits, whatever they are. On this hand you happen to have spades and clubs. Your 2♣ bid says that. Your partner chooses. Do not use this convention unless your hand clearly suggests that balancing is a good idea.

THE BALANCING TAKEOUT DOUBLE WHEN LHO OPENS WITH A PREEMPT AND RHO PASSES

THE RULE OF 7 AND THE RULE OF 8 OR 9

West	North	East	South
2♦	pass	pass	?

♠ Q 9 5 3 ♥ A J 4 ♦ 7 3 ♣ K J 5 4

This is a fairly lousy hand but it has decent support for all three missing suits and you have fair distribution.

I have already discussed the Rule of 7 ([see page 237](#)). It says that when your RHO opens with a preempt, you are entitled to hope that your partner has 7 normal points. When you are in the balancing seat as you are here, you can raise your expectation to 8 or 9 points. In my balancing book, I refer to the Rule of 8 or 9 as the Rule of 8/9. Here you have 12 support points counting your

shape. If your partner has 8/9 support points, your side has around 21, which is barely enough to compete over a two-level partscore. You can double. Of some note is that most of the missing high-card points will be with East so if your partner plays the hand, he will finesse East for the missing high cards and these finesses will be likely to work.

If you had one less diamond and one more heart, giving you perfect takeout double shape, you could double with even fewer high-card points.

Note that this hand is not worth a double if East had opened 1♦ in front of you.

West	North	East	South
3♥	pass	pass	?
♠ J 9 7 3 ♥ 8 ♦ A 9 7 2 ♣ K Q 5 3			

In theory, you do not have quite enough to double 3♥. You have 10 HCP and 3 more for the singleton heart. Since you have four-card support for any suit partner bids, you know your distribution will be valuable in the play. If your partner has 9 HCP your side will have 22, which is barely enough to fight at the three-level.

Note these two things are possible when a preempt is passed to you:

- You may get a big penalty if your partner has a lot of hearts.
- You may go for a big penalty if your RHO has most of the missing high-card points.

Nothing is guaranteed, one way or the other.

West	North	East	South
4♥	pass	pass	?
♠ K Q 8 ♥ 3 ♦ Q J 7 4 ♣ A Q J 7 4			

Double. I do not intend to discuss this at great length other than to say that a double of 4♥ and 4♣ is for takeout. There is no penalty overtone to this double. You need a fair hand but since you are hoping your partner has some values, you can be a little pushy. This hand is par with the main failing being that you have three spades only.

West	North	East	South
4♠	pass	pass	?

♠ 7 3 ♥ A K J 4 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ K 10 4 3

Double. This is takeout. A double of 4♠, whether opened by the player on your right or the player on your left, is for takeout. Your partner may choose to pass for penalties but he will do this because his hand says passing is best. He is not passing because you asked him to. Generally he bids if he has a reasonable hand and passes if he has a bad hand.

♠ 7 ♥ A K J 4 3 ♦ K 3 ♣ Q J 10 7 4

When bidding against an opening 4♠ bid, a 4NT overcall shows two suits, not three as was written up in early books on bridge. It shows two suits along the lines of what you have here. You are in the balancing seat but you still need fair values for this bid. If partner has a few points you can have a game. Even a slam is not impossible. Of course if he has nothing, you go down, perhaps doubled. This hand is presented as a reminder of what bids mean against a 4♠ opener.

REVIEW HANDS

This section shows examples of takeout double sequences. The intent is to show what you and your partner should be thinking about as the auction develops. You may find yourself in a constructive game-bidding sequence. You may find yourself in a competitive sequence. Perhaps it is right to double the opponents. How can you tell? And, if your partner is the one doing the doubling, should you sit for it?

In these hands, you will be South at all times. First, you should be thinking about what North is doing. Some of the hands in this section are judgment calls. But not all. Many require that you interpret what partner is doing. Then, after you decide what *he* is doing, you should decide what *you* should do.

1. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
1♥	1♠	2♣	pass
3♣	3♦	pass	?

What does 1♠ show? How many points? How many spades?

What does 3♦ show?

How many points does North have? How many diamonds does North have?

How many spades does North have? What should you bid?

♠ K Q 7 ♥ A K 6 3 ♦ Q 10 4 ♣ 7 6 3

Pass. North's 1♠ bid showed four or five spades and about 6 points. His 3♦ bid suggests an extra point or two and promises four or more diamonds. It also denies five spades. If North had five spades he would rebid them. Why introduce a minor if he could rebid a five-card spade suit? North has four spades and four or five diamonds. A possible hand for North:

♠ J 10 6 3 ♥ J 4 ♦ A J 9 8 3 ♣ 9 8

2. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♥	1♠	2♦	pass
pass	2♠	3♦	?

What does 1♠ show? How many points? How many spades?

What does 2♠ show? How many points? How many spades?

What should you bid?

♠ A Q 6 ♥ A K 7 3 ♦ 7 3 ♣ Q 9 4 3

Pass. Bidding is horrible. When partner bid 1♠ over 1♥ he promised four spades and perhaps as few as 5 points. His 2♠ bid does not promise five spades. He may have five, but he is just as likely to have four of them and an extra point or two.

2♠ was just an effort to push East-West up another level. From your point of view, you are happy with that. Your side has two heart tricks, possibly a heart ruff, one or two spade tricks, and a card in clubs. Do not bid again. North can have either of these hands:

♠ J 9 5 4 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ J 9 2 ♣ K 10 5

♠ K 10 8 2 ♥ 8 4 ♦ 9 6 2 ♣ K J 7 2

The first hand has five spades. When you have a five-card major and partner doubles, you should compete to the two-level unless you are really broke. The second hand is worth bidding again on the basis of high cards.

3. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	4♥	?

♠ A 6 ♥ 6 3 2 ♦ K J 7 6 ♣ Q 8 7 2

What should South bid?

Double. This is a balance-of-points double. North has 12 or more HCP usually, and you have 10. Your side has more high cards than them. Double and hope to beat them. You won't get rich, but if they go down you will give them

reason for future concern. Note that if you are using responsive doubles at this level, you would also double.

4. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

What does North's 2♠ bid show?

How many points does he have? How many spades does he have?

Is 2♠ forcing or invitational? What should South bid?

♠ A Q 2 ♥ 3 2 ♦ Q J 8 7 ♣ K Q 4 2

Pass. North's 2♠ bid is invitational. He has four or five spades. He has from 8 support points with five spades and good shape up to 11 support points with only four spades and bad shape. South has only three trumps, which is a big flaw. His double was fine but you always like to have four-card support for the majors. Here is North's hand:

♠ J 7 6 5 3 ♥ A 8 7 4 ♦ K 5 ♣ J 7

4♠ might make but it will take some luck. Playing in 2♠ is sufficient on these cards.

5. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	1♠
pass	2♠	pass	?

What does 2♠ show? How many points? How many spades?

What do you bid?

♠ Q 10 5 4 ♥ 8 6 5 2 ♦ K J 5 ♣ 3 2

North's double and then raise sequence traditionally shows 16 to 18 support points and it guarantees four-card support. Having four trumps is an unbreakable requirement on this auction.

Bid 3♠. This is a decent hand, which is better than its 6 HCP suggest. It is about as much as you can have on this bidding. If you had a fifth trump you

would bid game. You should go to 3♠ to see if North has a maximum. Not bidding with this hand will just encourage North to bid more in the future. If you bid your values, North will trust you and won't overbid in an effort to compensate for your underbidding habits.

6. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	3♠ ¹	?

1. Preemptive

East-West are playing 3♠ as preemptive, a time-honored agreement. How does your partnership play this 3♠ bid?

What do you bid over the 3♠ bid?

♠ 6 5 ♥ 3 ♦ K 8 7 6 2 ♣ K Q 7 6 2

It is standard today to play that the jump raise shows a weak hand with four or more trumps and some shape. If you have a strong raise you can start with a redouble if you have three trumps, and you can use the Jordan 2NT bid when you have four trumps with a limit raise or better strength.

This hand is a vote for responsive doubles. If you use them at this level, a double shows both minor suits and the strength to go to the four-level. If you don't use this bid you have to guess. The responsive double makes sure you don't have to guess which minor is best. If you double, your partner will tell you which one he likes. If you had just one minor suit you would bid it if your hand was strong enough. For instance:

♠ 8 7 4 ♥ 7 3 ♦ K Q 10 8 3 ♣ K J 4

With just one suit, you should bid 4♦.

7. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♥	dbl

What does your partner mean when he bids 3♠?

Is he inviting?

Is he preempting?

What do you bid?

♠ K Q J ♥ Q 9 ♦ A 10 4 3 ♣ Q J 7 4

North is using a special bid that is described in this book but nowhere else that I know of. He is showing an invitational hand that is actually weaker than he would have if he bid 2♦. What he has is five or six spades with extra shape. Here is what he has on this hand:

♠ A 9 7 6 5 3 ♥ J 7 4 3 ♦ J 7 ♣ 8

Knowing what partner has is the key. Your double was okay but it is as boring as they come. Passing 3♣ is easy.

8. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♥	?

♠ K J 8 7 4 3 ♥ 3 ♦ K 10 8 4 ♣ 8 3

Bid 4♦. After counting your high cards, your extra trumps, and your shape, you have a hand that is worth nearly an opening bid in support of spades. 2♦ would be feeble, 3♦ would be a step in the right direction, but 4♦ gets the prize.

9. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
1♣	pass	1NT	pass
2♣	dbl	pass	?

North passed originally and then doubled 2♣. What does he have and what are his intentions?

North has a takeout double of clubs that was not strong enough to double on the first round. When someone opens a minor and rebids it after a 1NT response, it is assumed that their side has a fit. Your partner cannot have a bunch of clubs.

What do you bid?

♠ Q J 7 6 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ Q 7 2 ♣ 9 8 2

Bid 2♦. The right bid requires you know what double means. When opener rebids his suit, most doubles are for penalty. There is one exception. When opener bids and rebids a minor after a 1NT response, a double is for takeout.

The assumption is that the opponents have a fit of sorts. Since he passed over 1♣, you can tell he doesn't have a good hand. Here is a possible hand for your partner:

♠ K 8 4 3 ♥ Q J 8 3 ♦ K J 8 3 ♣ 10

This hand is about average for partner's second round double. It is not good enough to double initially but on the second round it is perfect.

10. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♠	pass
2♣ ¹	dbl	pass	?

1. Drury — An artificial bid showing 10 points and three or more spades.

What do you bid?

♠ Q J 7 3 ♥ J 3 2 ♦ K J 8 3 ♣ J 7

You need an agreement here. Does double show good clubs or does it show a takeout double of spades? West, remember, is showing spade support. He is not showing clubs.

If double is for takeout, you should bid 2♦.

If double shows clubs, you should pass.

The right bid is a function of your agreements.

11. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
pass	pass	1♥	pass
2♣ ¹	dbl	pass	?

1. Drury — An artificial bid showing 10 points and three or more hearts.

What do you bid?

♠ K 3 ♥ Q J 3 2 ♦ J 8 3 ♣ 7 5 4 3

As in the previous hand, you need to know what double means. If it shows clubs, you should pass.

If double is takeout, you should also pass. The reason is this. You do not have anything useful to bid. When your partner doubles Drury for takeout, *you do not have to bid* with weak hands. They are currently in 2♣ doubled and they will never choose to play it here. They will continue bidding hearts. If you bid your suit, clubs, you could run into a double. Remember. A takeout double of Drury gives you an interesting option that you do not have anywhere else.

12. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	2♠
3♣	pass	3♦	?

Why didn't North bid over 3♣?

What do you bid?

♠ A Q 8 7 ♥ J 10 ♦ 10 9 4 3 2 ♣ Q J

Double. You showed your values with 2♠. Now you can double to show defense. Your clubs should prove useful since your partner showed something in clubs when he doubled. This is an auction where West may be overbidding. If so, he will pay for it.

Note that North passed over 3♣. This is a strong statement that he does not have anything to bid. If he has four spades, he has a minimum double. If North has four spades he can pull your double to 3♠, but it is not mandatory.

13. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	2♠	?

Do you use responsive doubles?

What do you bid?

♠ K J 7 6 4 ♥ Q 7 ♦ Q 7 2 ♣ J 9 6

With responsive doubles, you must pass. Double would show the minors.

If you don't use responsive doubles it is legal to double for penalty, but I can tell you that you will be lucky to defeat 2♠. You have five spades, but they aren't terribly good. The fact that you have five spades warns you that your partner is void. Declarer will play the hand knowing that trumps are breaking badly. You won't like the result.

Here is a fact you can take to the bank

When the opponents have a fit, you will not be successful doubling them when your trumps are in front of the original bidder. Since your spades are not solid, and because your double will tell declarer where they are, you will get very few tricks. This hand would be a better double if you were behind the opener.

I suggest you pass. If partner bids again, you will be well-placed no matter what he bids.

14. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
2NT ¹	3♦	4♣	?

1. Limit raise or better.

Most players today play a convention here. It is called the Jordan 2NT raise. What do you think partner has when he bids 3♦? Here is your hand. What should you bid?

♠ 8 3 ♥ K Q 10 3 ♦ Q J 10 8 ♣ A J 6

You should pass. Partner doesn't have a good hand. You know this because East has a full opening bid and West has about 9 HCP. Add in your 13 points and you know your partner has very little. When they use the Jordan 2NT raise, it is very good tactics to bid something. Here is what your partner has for his 3♦ bid:

♠ 9 6 ♥ 7 6 ♦ K 9 7 6 4 ♣ Q 8 7 3

He was competing gently. His bid might allow for you to bid to 5♦ as a save against 4♣. His bid might help you with the opening lead. Whatever benefits come of it, though, will be lost if you decide your partner has a big hand.

15. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
1NT	pass	2♦ ¹	pass
2♥	pass	pass	?

1. Transfer

Should South do something?

♠ A K 7 3 ♥ 3 ♦ Q 9 8 4 ♣ J 10 7 4

Double for takeout. Bidding is dangerous, but so is passing. It is expensive if you let them make a partscore when you have one yourself. Your shape is as good as it gets, so the risk is acceptable. As a small bonus, your partner may have five good hearts. If so, you might get a penalty out of this. Note that your partner won't expect you to have a huge hand. He heard the opening 1NT bid. He knows declarer has 15 to 17 points.

16. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	1♠
2♥	dbl	pass	?

What does North's second double show?

How many points does he have?

How many spades does he have?

What do you bid with these four hands?

♠ K 8 7 6 3 ♥ 7 3 ♦ Q J 6 3 ♣ 10 8

Bid 4♣. Partner's second double further describes the original takeout double. It denies four spades. If North had four trumps he would raise spades. North has only three spades and about 18 or 19 points.

♠ K 8 7 3 ♥ 7 4 3 ♦ 7 6 3 ♣ 10 5 3

Bid 2♣. You have a poor hand. Rebidding 2♣ does not show five spades. It says you are tired of the bidding and want out.

♠ Q 10 7 5 4 ♥ 8 7 4 ♦ Q 9 3 ♣ J 4

Bid 3♣. Partner has a hand worth at least 18 points in support of spades. The reason he did not raise spades directly is that he has only three of them. This hand has some nice values including five spades and a smattering of useful cards. 3♣ is not forcing. Partner will bid game or pass according to his hand.

♠ J 8 7 3 ♥ 6 5 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ J 10 4 2

Bid 3♥. Opposite the points partner is promising, you should have a game. Bid 3♥ and hope to get partner to bid 3NT. The one thing you can't do is make a

weak rebid when you have this good a hand. Awkward? Yes. At least North will infer you have just four spades, so he won't go bonkers over spades.

17. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
pass	1♥	2♦	dbl ¹
pass	3♣	pass	?

1. Big, balanced hand with just three-card support.

What do you think North's shape is? How many points does he have?
What do you bid?

♠ K Q 7 4 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ 9 3 ♣ A K Q 7

Here are the bids your partner can make after your second double:

- 2♥ This shows a bad hand with four or more hearts. He has no interest in going higher.
- 2♠ He has four spades with a few points. His bid is mildly invitational.
- 2NT He has a diamond stop and enough points to make a positive noise. You can do many things over 2NT, including passing it.
- 3♣ He has a five-card club suit with a few points. His bid is mildly invitational. You can pass.
- 3♦ This is his only forcing bid. It shows a maximum 1♥ bid. The continuation bids are all natural. 3♦ is forcing to game so once partner cuebids their suit, the bidding has to continue.
- 3♥ This is invitational showing 6 or so points with five or more hearts.
- 3NT Natural with a maximum 1♥ bid and good diamond stoppers.
- 4♥ Natural, usually with six or more hearts and a maximum 1♥ bid.

Going back to the problem, here is a hand that North might have for his 3♣ bid:

♠ A 2 ♥ 9 7 6 2 ♦ 10 8 ♣ J 8 6 5 3

He has a few points and he has five clubs. South can pass 3♣ if he wishes and if he does, 3♣ will be a better contract than 3♥.

18. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1NT	dbl

What does South show with his double? Here are your choices:

1. He is showing a big hand. At least 17 HCP.
2. He is making a takeout double. He has a hand that would have doubled an opening 1♦ bid on his right.

Almost all experienced players play choice two. South's double is takeout. Here are three hands. Which one is appropriate for South's double?

- A. ♠ A 3 ♥ 9 7 4 ♦ K J 4 ♣ A K Q 9 8
- B. ♠ Q 7 6 3 ♥ Q J 8 4 ♦ 9 ♣ A Q J 10
- C. ♠ 7 3 ♥ A K Q 7 ♦ K Q J 3 ♣ K 5 3

Hand A is not a double. Double is takeout, saying you have takeout shape with short diamonds.

Hand B is correct for a double. You have support for spades, hearts, and clubs, and you have opening bid values.

Hand C, as nice as it is, is not a double of 1NT. Double is takeout and your partner will almost always bid spades. He could have four bad spades and likely will go down a lot. If you think that you can make this better by bidding 2NT over his 2♠ bid, stop for a second and count the points. Opener has 13 in general and may have more. The 1NT bid shows 6 to 9. You have 18. Add these all up and you will see that they usually have their half of the deck, meaning your partner has 0, 1, 2, or 3. If you bid 2NT, you won't make it. South should pass 1NT and not create a dangerous and unmanageable situation.

19. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	pass
1♠	pass	1NT	pass
pass	dbl	pass	?

What does North have to bid this way?

What do you bid? If you choose to pass, what do you lead?

♠ 9 8 ♥ Q 9 7 4 ♦ A 10 4 ♣ J 10 7 3

North isn't interested in hearing you bid. He is making a penalty double. When the opponents stop in 1NT, doubles are for penalty. He has good spades (dummy's suit) and expects you to lead a one.

You should pass and lead the ♠9. A possible North hand:

♠ A Q 10 7 4 ♥ 10 6 ♦ K J 5 ♣ A 9 4

Your partner promises more than just spades. He promises some values too. You should be pleased that you have as much as you do.

20. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	2♠	pass
pass	dbl	pass	?

♠ 9 5 3 ♥ 10 6 4 3 ♦ Q 5 3 ♣ 10 9 8

What does North's second double mean?

How many points does he have? How many hearts does he have?

What do you bid?

Partner is making a second takeout double. Since you have to bid at the three-level, your partner must have a hand good enough to make his double. He rates to have a 4-4-4-1 hand with 16 support points. He might have three hearts, but hearts is your longest suit so you should bid 3♥.

SPECIAL THOUGHT

I mentioned Lebensohl, which is generally used when you double a weak two-bid. Your side can, if you wish, use Lebensohl on an auction where you make a takeout double at the two-level, as on this hand where North already made one takeout double and is now doubling the same suit again. If Lebensohl is available, you would bid 2NT, getting partner to bid 3♣. You would then bid 3♥, telling partner you have a bad hand.

♠ 9 5 ♥ K 10 6 4 3 ♦ J 5 3 ♣ 8 5 3

This hand is much better than the previous hand. When partner doubles 1♠ and then doubles 2♠, you have a good hand given the bidding. You bid 3♥, which says (if using Lebensohl) that given the bidding, you have a worthwhile hand. On this hand you would not mind at all if partner goes on to game.

21. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	pass	1♠
2♥	3♣	pass	?

How big a hand does North have?

Here are three possible hands. Which one is worth a 3♣ bid?

- A. ♠ Q 8 7 ♥ 9 ♦ K J 4 ♣ A K Q J 7 4
- B. ♠ 6 3 ♥ 8 7 ♦ A K Q 7 ♣ A K J 7 5
- C. ♠ 3 ♥ A 3 ♦ A K J ♣ K Q J 10 9 6 4

The correct answer is hand C. When you double them and later freely bid a suit, you need an especially big hand when you have a minor suit. The reason is that the opponents may be able to get the bidding to the three-level, forcing you to bid four of your suit. This takes a very good hand.

Hand A is way too weak to do this. You should bid 2♣ and plan on bidding again if the auction gives you a chance to do so.

Hand B is also too weak. As good as this hand is, it is not good enough to double and then bid 3♣. Best is to bid 2♣ and then find a way to show the diamonds later. You may or may not get that chance. At least you aren't asking for trouble.

Hand C is adequate for a double followed by a club bid. You need a hand like this to cater to your opponents bidding more hearts.

22. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
1♣	pass	1♥	pass
2♣	dbl	pass	?

Is this double for takeout or penalty?

What do you bid?

♠ Q 7 3 ♥ Q 9 7 6 3 ♦ Q J 6 2 ♣ 8

Pass. When opener bids and rebids a suit, doubles are for penalty except in the special case when opener is rebidding his minor after a 1NT response from his

partner. On this bidding, it looks like North has five clubs. He has something like this:

♠ K 10 5 ♥ A ♦ K 9 4 3 ♣ K J 10 7 5

Note that North has defensive strength. It would be silly to double 2♣ with nothing on the side.

23. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	pass
1NT	dbl	2♦	?

Is this double for takeout or penalty?

What do you bid?

♠ K 8 7 ♥ J 10 7 6 3 ♦ Q 10 4 ♣ Q 6

North's double is takeout. Bid 3♥. When an opponent responds 1NT to a one-bid, even if it is a forcing response to one of a major, a double is takeout. It says North would have doubled a 1♠ opening bid. South has an excellent hand if North has the takeout double he is supposed to have. If North has a balanced bunch of points, then there is a mix-up in the bidding. This is the hand you are expecting:

♠ 5 ♥ Q 8 5 2 ♦ A K 9 5 ♣ K J 8 2

If North has it, 3♥ will be fine. And if North has more he will go on to game. North *should not* have this hand:

♠ J 4 2 ♥ A 5 ♦ A J 8 6 ♣ A 10 7 5

You must have agreements about North's double. My opinion is the popular one that double is for takeout. It works. It handles hands that would otherwise be impossible to bid, and it comes up frequently. If North is doubling with this hand, 3♥ won't make. Is your partnership in agreement about this auction?

24. Both vul.

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

What does double show? How many points? What does North have in diamonds?

What do you bid?

♠ J 10 7 ♥ Q 7 6 3 ♦ Q J 6 ♣ K J 4

Bid 2♥. North is making a balancing double. It is not for penalty as most doubles are when opener bids and rebids his suit. When opener bids and rebids a minor after a 1NT response, double is for takeout. On all other sequences, double is business. Here is North's hand:

♠ A 9 6 3 ♥ J 10 5 4 ♦ 8 ♣ A 10 6 3

Your partner did not have enough to double 1♦, but on this auction it sounds like they may stop in 2♦. He can safely double 2♦ for takeout.

25. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♠	pass	1NT	pass
2♠	dbl	pass	?

What does double show?

What do you bid?

♠ — ♥ Q 9 7 6 4 2 ♦ A 7 6 3 ♣ 8 7 3

Pass. This auction is so strongly defined as penalty that you really don't need to look at your hand to say pass. When you do look at it, your spade holding will tell you what you already know. By the way, the void is not a good sign for you. It would be better if you had one spade so that when you get in, you would be able to lead it should the defense require that. In any event, pass and be glad you have a trick to contribute.

Do not bid hearts. Bidding 3♥ is the best way imaginable to lose your partner. Compare this sequence to the prior sequence. Here, opener bid and rebid a *major* after a 1NT response. Double is for penalty. On the prior sequence, LHO bid and rebid a *minor* after a 1NT response. Be aware of the difference.

26. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
		1 (suit)	dbl
pass	1NT	pass	?

RHO opens with one of a suit and you double. Your partner bids 1NT.

What does your partner need to bid 1NT when:

- The opening bid is 1♣?
- The opening bid is 1♦?
- The opening bid is 1♥?
- The opening bid is 1♠?

If the opening bid is 1♣ your partner promises around 8 to 11 for 1NT.

If the opening bid is 1♦ your partner promises around 7 to 11 for 1NT.

If the opening bid is 1♥ your partner promises around 6 to 11 for 1NT.

If the opening bid is 1♠ your partner promises around 5 to 11 for 1NT, but it is possible that he has to bid it with even less if he does not have a four-card suit he can bid.

27. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♥	pass
4♥	dbl	pass	?

What does double show?

What do you bid?

♠ 10 6 3 ♥ J 8 ♦ 10 7 5 4 3 ♣ J 8 2

North's double is for takeout. It is not for penalty. You have the option of passing it, but when North doubled, he fully expected you to bid something. What you have to do is weigh the chances of setting 4♥ against the chances of going down if you bid. Here, it doesn't look like you can take eleven tricks in diamonds. Passing and hoping for four tricks on defense is a better choice, although any decision can fall flat.

With your side vulnerable, letting them play in 4♥ doubled for -590 may not be bad if 5♦ doubled is going down 800. Optimistically, you will set 4♥, which will be the best of all worlds.

28. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	dbl
pass	1♥	pass	2♥
pass	3♥	pass	?

What does 3♥ say? How many hearts does North have?

What do you bid?

♠ A K J 3 ♥ Q 10 6 4 ♦ A J 7 2 ♣ 5

3♥ is invitational. You showed 16 to 18 support points, although in fact I have suggested you can raise with 15 if your hand is good. This hand is close to a maximum so I suggest bidding 4♥. Note that North is counting on you for four-card support. North can bid this way with four little hearts if the rest of his hand fills in the needed points. North can have either of these hands:

♠ Q 6 ♥ J 7 5 3 ♦ K Q 10 4 ♣ J 8 4

♠ 8 ♥ K J 9 7 3 ♦ Q 8 5 ♣ 9 6 4 2

The first hand has 9 HCP; 8 if you ignore the ♣J. While a close decision, going to 3♥ is a fair bid. Note that the hearts are not very good. Bidding 3♥ demonstrates faith that partner will produce four of them.

The second hand has only 6 HCP but it has a good five-card suit and excellent shape. This hand is stronger than the first hand. In fact, it is good enough to consider bidding 4♥. In any event, either hand offers a good play for game facing your hand.

29. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♠	dbl	pass	?

What do you bid?

♠ K 10 6 5 4 2 ♥ 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ J 9 8 5

Bid 2♣. Do not pass. Passing shows a solid holding in their suit. Your spades are ephemeral at best. Bid 2♣. If notrump is right, your partner will bid some more. Be grateful you have a suit to bid. It could have been worse. Imagine

what you would do with one less club and one more heart. The following diagram shows why you should bid 2♣ instead of 1NT.

♠ 7
♥ A J 7 4
♦ K J 8 6
♣ A 7 4 2
[redacted]
♠ K 10 6 5 4 2
♥ 2
♦ 3 2
♣ J 9 8 5

How would you do in 1NT? Well, you will get a spade trick if they lead one, a heart, a diamond if you guess correctly, and a club. Perhaps you can generate another trick somewhere. A likely down three, and possibly more. And it could be doubled. In 2♣ you have chances that you do not have in notrump.

You will find an excellent reason for bidding 2♣ with this hand by referring to the S. J. Simon hand in this book ([see page 93](#)).

30. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
			pass
1♥	pass	2♥	?

What do you bid?

♠ 8 7 6 2 ♥ 8 3 ♦ A Q 8 ♣ K Q 9 4

Double. The importance of this sequence is that the opponents have arrived at a contract they like. They have found a fit, which is the goal of bidding. The happier the opponents are, the harder you should try to get into the bidding. Double for takeout. You are a passed hand, so North will not expect more. If you were not a passed hand, doubling would be nervous but reasonable.

31. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
2♣	2♥	1♦	dbl

Which of the following hands might your partner have for a 2♥ bid?

- A. ♠ Q 8 7 ♥ Q J 7 4 ♦ A Q 9 4 ♣ 7 4
- B. ♠ 10 9 7 4 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ K 5 ♣ 9 8 5
- C. ♠ 8 6 ♥ J 8 7 6 3 ♦ A 4 ♣ 8 7 4 3

The answer is hand C.

With hand A, your partner would jump to 3♥. He has plenty to invite. This hand has 11 working HCP, making it way too good for a 2♥ bid.

With hand B, your partner would make a responsive double if you are using them. This double says you have both majors and enough points at least to be safe at the two-level. If you are not using the responsive double, this is a hard hand for your partner to bid.

With hand C, your partner would bid 2♥. Counting his five-card heart suit, he has about 8 support points, which is more than enough. You count the high cards, the shape, and then you add something more for the fifth heart and something for the fact that you have two honors that are known to be helpful.

32. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	pass	2♦	?

Without looking at your hand, you should expect that you will pass. The opponents have strength, which should warn you to stay out of the bidding. Further, since they haven't found a fit there is no reason you should have a good fit of your own. For all you know, they are on their way to 3NT. Keep out of the bidding unless you have something special.

Here is a hand. Armed with the idea that you do not bid against a two-over-one response, might you do so with the following hand?

♠ A 10 9 6 4 ♥ 4 ♦ 5 ♣ Q J 8 7 5 3

What do you bid?

Double. This extreme hand is the sort you need to bid against a two-over-one auction. Even with this distributional hand, you must note the vulnerability before bidding. On this hand the vulnerability is favorable for you and you can double. The important thing is that North knows you aren't doubling with a normal 13 or more point hand. You should have a hand like the one here and your partner should bid with that in mind.

33. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
redbl	2♠	pass	?

What does 2♠ show?

How many points does North have?

How many spades does North have?

How many tricks do you think North can make in spades facing the following hand?

What do you bid?

♠ A K 3 ♥ Q J 7 2 ♦ K 3 ♣ K J 6 3

After LHO redoubles, you know North doesn't have any points. You can tell from your hand that if East has an opening bid and LHO has a redouble, North has a maximum of 0 points. If your double were a little weaker, say with 14 points instead of 17, then North could have a maximum of 3 points. North (hopefully) noted that both sides are vulnerable. He must have a handful of spades and probably a little shape. Here is a likely hand for North:

♠ 10 8 7 6 5 2 ♥ 9 8 4 ♦ 10 7 6 ♣ 8

In spades, he rates to make two or go down one, which is about what you should expect. Bidding too much, you say? North is lucky you have a good hand, but he is unlucky that you have only three spades. North made a good bid. You should pass and later remember to congratulate partner for his choice.

34. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	pass	pass	dbl
pass	1NT	pass	?

What does 1NT show?

What do you bid now?

♠ 8 4 ♥ A K 6 4 2 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ A Q 4

Pass. North didn't bid 1NT over 1♠, so he has limited his hand. For you to make 3NT, North needs 7 or 8 points. He might have 7, but he won't have 8. This hand is borderline between raising to 2NT and passing, with the pass getting my vote. Since the best you can hope for is 7 points and since North may have as little as 4 or 5, passing and trying for a plus score is wisest. Note that the defenders have a known suit to attack, which diminishes the value of your hand a little. You may have nine tricks, but they may have five or six first. It would be nicer if you had the ♥10 and ♥9 instead of these little spots.

When you doubled, you had a secret wish that your partner had a lot of spades and could pass your double for penalties. Obviously this wish did not come true.

35. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
			1♠
2♣	pass	3♣	dbl
pass	3♦	pass	?

♠ K Q J 7 4 ♥ K J 9 5 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ 5

Was South's double correct?

What should he do now?

South did well to double on the second round. There is a possible gold mine in this hand. Perhaps your partner can pass 3♣ doubled. Double is a more descriptive bid than bidding 3♥. Your double gave partner a chance to bid hearts or to return to spades, and he bid diamonds. Best is to pass. You have the extra values you promised but you do not have enough shape to continue.

36. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
2♣	pass	pass	1♥ ?

What do you think is happening?

What do you bid?

♠ A K J 6 ♥ A K J 7 6 ♦ A J 8 ♣ 9

Double. You do not mind if partner passes your reopening double. In fact, you are hoping he can. Your shape is normal for a double and you have piles of defensive winners. Double and hope that partner can sit for it. The one thing you must not do is bid 2♣ or some number of hearts. All hands with takeout double shape make takeout doubles, no matter how strong they are.

37. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
3♥ ¹	3♠	4♥	dbl ?

1. Preemptive

What do you expect from North?

How many spades? How many points?

Partner is invited to bid aggressively here. He can have four spades with at least 9 support points and as many as a good 11. He can have five spades with at least 7 support points and as many as a good 10.

Which of the following hands should bid 4♠ over RHO's 4♥?

- A. ♠ Q 8 7 ♥ 4 ♦ A Q 9 4 ♣ K J 8 7 5
- B. ♠ A K 7 4 ♥ 6 4 ♦ K J 5 ♣ Q 8 4 3
- C. ♠ K Q 9 4 ♥ 3 ♦ A J 8 7 ♣ K Q 5 4

Hand A has only three spades. This by itself is enough to stop you from bidding game.

Hand B has four spades but it has two hearts and otherwise soft cards. One important thing you should consider is that you might actually have two spade winners on defense. RHO is not a magician. He may well have judged to bid 4♥

with two losing spades in his hand. When you bid 4♠ you need to feel as if you are sure they can make 4♥ or that you are sure 4♠ won't go down a lot. This hand offers no assurances either way.

Hand C is the one to bid 4♠ with. It has four good spades. Four trumps is a necessary start to bidding again. It has a singleton heart. It has nice minor-suit cards. In other words, it has lots of reasons to bid and no obvious reasons not to bid.

38. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥ redbl	pass pass	2♥ pass	dbl ?

What's going on?

What do you bid?

♠ Q 8 7 3 ♥ — ♦ K Q 8 3 ♣ A Q 9 8 4

This is not a judgment bid. It is a systemic bid. Either North's pass says he wants to play in 2♥ redoubled or it says he has nowhere to go and wants you to do something. I offered two rules earlier which cover this situation. The applicable rule for this auction is this: If you are at the two-level or higher, a pass of a redouble says you want to play for penalty. North is asking you to pass. Even though the stakes are high you should accept North's decision. Partner has:

♠ J 10 2 ♥ A J 10 8 5 ♦ 9 6 2 ♣ 6 5

You might make 3♣. You also have a good chance to set 2♥ redoubled. It will be exciting! The important issue is that your partner said that he wants to defend. If he didn't, he would bid something.

39. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
1♠	3♠	pass	?

What is North thinking about?

What do you bid?

♠ J 10 7 6 3 ♥ Q J 7 4 ♦ Q J 8 ♣ 3

North's bid is an odd kind of takeout double. He is asking South to bid 3NT if he has a spade stopper. You have one. Bid 3NT. North should have a running minor suit and a couple of stoppers, and is worried about opener's suit.

♠ 9 4 ♥ K 5 ♦ A 7 ♣ A K Q J 10 8 7

This is a useful convention. Note that it applies *only* over 1♥ and 1♠. If the opening bid is a minor suit, the jump is natural along preemptive lines.

For the record, how would you bid the North hand if you didn't have this treatment available?

Here are some thoughts on how partner responds to 3♠ when he does not have a stopper in their suit.

1. If he bids 4♣, he says he has a worthless hand and wants to play in four of your minor suit.
2. If he bids 4♦, he says he has 8 or so useful points. This bid is forcing to game.
3. If he bids 4♥, he says he has a good, long heart suit and is willing to play there. He is not promising a big hand.
4. If he bids 4♠ (opener's suit) he shows a singleton spade and a hand with 8 or so useful points.

40. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
1♥	2♥	pass	?

What does North have for this bid?

How many hearts does he have? How many points does he have?

How many spades does he have? What do you bid?

♠ A K 7 2 ♥ Q J 8 ♦ 7 6 ♣ A K 10 9

Bid 4♥. This assumes 2♥ is a natural bid showing 7 to 9 points and five or six hearts. 4♥ will be cold if North has what is expected. He would double 1♥ if he had four hearts and 8 or more points.

Here is his hand:

♠ 8 3 ♥ A 9 7 6 4 ♦ 10 9 2 ♣ Q J 5

41. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♦	dbl
3♦ ¹	?		

1. Preemptive

What does partner need to bid 3♥ or 3♠?

What would you expect if your partner doubled 3♦?

What would you expect if your partner bid 4♥ or 4♠?

I will answer these questions by example.

Which of these North hands would bid 3♥?

A. ♠ 8 4 3 ♥ J 7 5 4 ♦ A 4 ♣ K Q 5 4

B. ♠ 7 5 ♥ Q 8 7 5 4 ♦ 4 ♣ A Q J 7 4

Hand A would bid 3♥, terrible heart suit notwithstanding. This hand has almost 12 points in support of hearts. If you do not bid 3♥, a potential game will get lost.

Hand B is too good to bid 3♥. It should bid 4♥. In support of hearts it has around 14 points and it has a five-card heart suit. This is a wonderful hand, all things considered.

Which of these hands would double 3♦?

A. ♠ J 8 7 4 ♥ A 9 7 5 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ A 8

B. ♠ A Q J 4 ♥ K Q 9 4 ♦ 5 3 ♣ J 8 5

Both of these hands would double. This assumes that you are playing responsive doubles, something I recommend strongly. These two hands show why.

Hand A has both majors and it has enough points to bid at the three-level. Partner will bid a major and this hand will quit. A responsive double at the three-level says you have around 10 support points for either major. If your partner has 15 good points or more, he should bid game in his best major.

Hand B also has both majors and in this case it has enough to bid game. Double, getting partner to show a major, and then raise him to game.

Which of these hands would jump to 4♥ or 4♠?

- A. ♠ 7 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ A Q 9 7 4
- B. ♠ A J 7 5 4 ♥ 5 ♦ 2 ♣ Q 7 6 5 4 3
- C. ♠ 7 6 3 ♥ A K J 4 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ K Q 7

All three of these hands would jump to game.

Hand A bids 4♥ rather than show the clubs because he expects heart support. It is easier to take ten tricks in hearts than eleven tricks in clubs.

Hand B has remarkable distribution. Only 7 HCP but great shape. Bidding less than 4♣ is conservative and bidding clubs is misguided.

Hand C has so many points that a game should exist. You expect partner will be short in diamonds after they both bid diamonds. Even if partner has three hearts, a heart contract is likely to be best. Any bid but 4♥ misses the mark here.

42. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	2♣	2♥
3♣	pass	pass	?

Why didn't North bid over 3♣?

What are the chances that North has four hearts for you?

What do you bid?

♠ 7 2 ♥ K 10 8 3 ♦ K J 8 6 3 ♣ 10 4

North's pass is straightforward. He doesn't have a good enough hand to bid 3♥. Too many players do bid 3♥ on this sequence when they shouldn't, but this particular North has the discipline to pass when he should.

North could have four hearts but if he does, he has a minimum double. If he has three hearts he can also have up to 15 points. Raising with three trumps after doubling is rare. You should really try not to do so.

South should bid 3♦. You have a maximum and you do not want to sell out. Why give up when the hand may belong to your side? Note that South can bid this way with four hearts and four or five diamonds.

South usually doesn't have five hearts. If he did he would rebid them, or would certainly think about it. Don't worry that North will go back to hearts. If he does, he has four-card support. Bidding this way assures that you will play in the right suit.

43. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	2♦	2♠
3♦	dbl	pass	?

What's up?

What is your bid?

♠ Q 8 5 3 ♥ A 5 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ 10 9 8 4

Pass. North is telling you he has a balanced 18-point hand with just three spades. He is likely to have three diamonds, too. I think you can pass this. There are two good reasons to think you will set them. First, your 6 points and partner's hand will include a lot of winners. Second, it is common for opener to bid this way without a strong hand. He is trying to push the opponents up a level. This time, it won't work.

If you had a fifth spade, you would bid 3♠. If you had a fifth spade and a maximum 2♠ bid, you would jump to game.

44. N-S vul.

West	North	East	South
			1♣
dbl	pass	1♥	dbl
2♥	pass	pass	dbl
pass	2♠	pass	?

What do each of South's doubles mean?

What are the most points North can have?

What do you bid?

♠ K Q J 4 ♥ 4 ♦ A 8 3 ♣ A Q J 8 3

Pass. North didn't bid over West's double so that is a hint that he is broke. Your first double was takeout and showed at least 16 support points. North should stretch to bid on the second round, but once again, he didn't. When you doubled a second time it was still takeout and showed a better hand than the first double. North's 2♠ bid has come reluctantly. His range, if he is bidding properly, is from 0 to 3 points. Here is what he actually had:

♠ 10 6 5 3 ♥ Q 7 3 2 ♦ J 9 7 ♣ 10 4

North has 3 points but he discounted his $\heartsuit Q$, as he should. In effect, he has just one jack and a doubleton in partner's suit.

How should North have bid if he had this hand instead?

$\spadesuit A 6 5 3 \heartsuit 8 7 3 2 \diamond J 9 7 \clubsuit 10 4$

He would bid $2\spadesuit$ over $2\heartsuit$. North has as much as he is likely to have and is entitled to show these values.

45. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
		$1\spadesuit$	dbl
redbl	pass	pass	$2\clubsuit$
dbl	redbl	pass	?

What's partner doing?

What is your bid?

$\spadesuit 6 5 \heartsuit A Q 8 5 \diamond Q J 7 \clubsuit Q J 10 9$

Your partner passed West's redouble, leaving it up to you to bid something. You bid $2\clubsuit$. West doubled you. Your partner redoubled. Do you think he likes $2\clubsuit$ and is hoping to make a killing here?

If you believe that, you are being a bit optimistic.

Their bidding says they have about 24 HCP and they may have more. Your partner has a maximum of 4 points. He is not saying he is happy in $2\clubsuit$ doubled. He is saying that he wants to go to a red suit and he wants you to choose. You have longer hearts than diamonds and so you bid them. When you bid $2\heartsuit$, West doubles that too. Your partner passes and East passes. What do you do?

What you do is pass, expecting you are in the best contract available. Here is your partner's hand:

$\spadesuit 10 8 7 4 \heartsuit J 10 4 2 \diamond 10 9 4 2 \clubsuit 3$

$2\heartsuit$ is a bad spot and you are going to go down. But given what your partner has, it is a sane contract. If you are lucky, you might go down two. If you are really lucky, you might go down one. They have a sure 3NT so if you keep your wits about you and play carefully and achieve down two only, you will have done a good thing.

46. E-W vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	pass
2♦	dbl	3♠	pass
4♠	pass	pass	?

What do you bid?

♠ K Q 6 4 ♥ 7 6 3 ♦ 8 7 4 ♣ 10 9 3

Pass. You have two defensive winners, but the bidding tells you the opponents are going to make 4♠ in spite of your trumps. When they start with a two-over-one sequence and your partner doubles for takeout, it shows a weak hand and excellent shape. North has five hearts and five diamonds and decent cards in these suits, but not much defense. The opponents are going to make 4♠ and might make an overtrick. Leave well enough alone. Don't discourage partner from trying to do something good.

47. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	1♠
2♦	pass	pass	?

♠ 10 9 7 6 3 ♥ K 8 ♦ 8 7 3 ♣ J 9 4

Are you entitled to bid again?

What is your hand worth in a spade contract?

Bid 2♠. My unofficial point count suggests you have 7 support points for spades. Selling out to 2♦ will be expensive if you can make 2♠. And why shouldn't you? You have two honor cards in partner's suits and you have the brightest of values, a fifth spade. North's pass does not deny a decent double. He can have a pretty good hand with three spades. You can afford to compete.

48. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
pass	2♥	pass	?

♦ K 3 ♥ K 10 8 ♦ A K 7 4 ♣ A J 3 2

Should you bid again and if so, how should you continue?

Bid 2♣. You might have a game if partner has 8 points and you need a way to tell partner what you have. When the bidding goes this way, you have a bid that exactly describes an 18-point hand with three-card support. Cuebidding does this. This is one of those things that you need to discuss with partner *before* it comes up at the table. This trick only works if you can bid two of opener's suit.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	dbl
pass	2♥	2♣	?

If the bidding went this way instead, you can't bid 2♣ to show this hand. The solution here is to double 2♣, which says you have the big hand with three-card support. Again, be sure to discuss this in advance.

Note that if you had four-card support, you would raise to whatever level your values called for.

49. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	1♥
1♠	pass	pass	?

♦ 8 3 ♥ J 10 6 4 ♦ A J 8 7 ♣ 10 9 4

Some minimum hands are worth a second bid. Is this one of them?

Bid 2♦. You rate to have a 4-4 fit in one of the red suits. Even if you don't, your high cards should take care of you. Note that your partner will not expect more than four hearts from you. If he has three hearts and three or four diamonds, he will pass 2♦.

When responding to a takeout double, most of your hands will be in the 0- to 8-point range. Generally you will make a minimum bid but there are times when a 0- to 8-point hand will keep on bidding. You can forget the 0- to

3-point hands but the 4- to 8-point hands offer a world of things to think about. You may bid and then bid again. You may make a free bid at the one-level and then bid again. You might make a free bid at the two-level. It is not impossible that you would compete to the three-level. These little hands are often the key to successful competitive bidding. In fact, even some of your 0- to 3-point hands will come to life when your partner shows significant extra values. In time you will learn to love these little guys when the time is right.

50. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♣	dbl	pass	1♠
2♦	pass	pass	?

♠ Q 7 6 5 2 ♥ 7 ♦ K 10 8 2 ♣ 4 3 2

How many spades do you expect partner to have?

How good do you expect partner's hand to be?

Do you bid again?

Partner does not have a good double but he has promised something. You suspect partner has three spades since he did not bid 2♠. But four of them is still possible. Bid 2♠. You have five cards and you know partner has three spades. Don't bother showing diamonds. You know there is an eight- or nine-card spade fit so you should play in spades. If you had four spades and five diamonds, you would respond 1♠ and might later compete in diamonds. If so, your partner won't go back to spades without four of them. In support of either of your suits you have around 9 support points, perhaps more. Do not give up on this hand.

51. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	1♠
2♦	dbl	pass	?

♠ J 8 7 4 3 ♥ 3 ♦ 7 4 3 2 ♣ K J 9

What does partner's second double show?

What do you do?

Partner's double shows three spades and 18 support points. It is not a penalty double. Bid 3♠. You have five spades, a singleton heart, and good club

honors. If you had a little more you would bid 4♠. Imagine you had this hand instead:

♠ J 8 7 4 ♥ 8 3 ♦ 7 4 3 2 ♣ J 9 5

You have only four spades, you do not have a singleton, and you do not have the ♣K. This is a bad hand but you would still bid 2♠. Since the actual hand above has many good features, you need to find a stronger bid than 2♠.

52. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
1♦	dbl	pass	1♥
2♦	pass	pass	?

♠ 8 5 ♥ A Q 9 8 ♦ 7 6 5 ♣ J 8 7 2

How pushy should you be?

Bid 2♥. Given that partner has at least three hearts, you should have a play for it. You have a good suit, which is important. I hope you enjoy playing in a 4-3 fit. It is likely. Doing so, though, is better than letting them play in 2♦, which should make. Note that you don't bid 3♣. That gets you a level higher.

53. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	2♥	?

♠ K 10 9 5 ♥ 10 9 8 ♦ A J 4 3 ♣ Q 10

Should you bid spades and if so, how many?

Might you make a responsive double?

It is not enough to bid 2♠. You have four good spades and about 11 support points. Bid 3♠, showing an invitational hand. This doesn't promise four cards, just a good hand.

If you happened to have a fifth spade you would have enough to bid 4♠. The number of trumps you have makes a difference to how easy a hand will be to play.

Do not abuse the responsive double. That bid shows both minors if you were to double 2♥. If you use the responsive double on the wrong hands, it will create problems.

54. Both vul.

West	North	East	South
1♥	dbl	4♥	?

♠ A 7 5 3 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ K 7 4 3

Should you bid 4♦?

Should you do something else?

Double. Theoretically this is a penalty double. Given their auction, you won't often have any heart winners. More likely you will have a 9- or 10-point hand and you will double to show that fact. Usually your partner passes but he can bid if he has a strongly distributional hand. Given that your side has 22 to 24 HCP, you will set them more times than not. Expect 200 or 500. Occasionally you get 800 when East has bid too much. Yes, you may be able to make 4♦, but that would require a well-fitting hand from partner. With bad breaks expected, it is enough to double.

55. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
pass	2♣	1♥ dbl pass	?

♠ K 8 6 5 ♥ A 9 ♦ Q J 8 7 4 ♣ K J

Should you have doubled in the first place?

Should you pass 2♣?

This is an imperfect takeout double but your hand is good enough to bid. Hopefully your partner will bid spades or notrump or even diamonds. When he bids 2♣, you can bid 2♦ *if you are using Equal Level Conversion*. When you double and then bid 2♦, you are saying you have a hand like this one. Be sure that your partnership is using this bidding tool. If you are not using it, you can't bid 2♦ because that would show a big hand.

It is probably all right to double if you are not using ELC but you have to be willing to pass 2♣. It may be a bad spot but you should come out ahead most of the time.

56. Neither vul.

West	North	East	South
1♦	pass	1♥	dbl
pass	2♦	pass	?

♠ Q J 7 4 ♥ A 4 3 ♦ 6 ♣ A Q 8 5 3

Should you have doubled 1♥?

What do you bid when partner bids 2♦?

Your double was fine. You had hoped to find a fit, which was a sane idea.

Partner is bidding diamonds naturally. This is logical. He may have something like this hand:

♠ 10 3 ♥ 10 8 5 2 ♦ Q 10 9 8 5 3 ♣ 6

2♦ rates to be your side's safest spot. It won't make but you should do better in diamonds than in either of the suits you were hoping for.

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