

## **Lesson #13 – Take-out Doubles**

To understand take-out doubles, here is a review of the guidelines for overcalls:

1. An overcall requires 5+ cards in a suit, at least one honor, and 8-16 points.
2. An overcall shows fewer than 17 pts.
3. Do not overcall with 4 cards in a suit.
4. Exception: An overcall of 1NT over a suit by opponent shows 15-18 points and a stopper in opponent's suit.

When to use a Take-Out Double: (Opponent bid a suit.)

1. You have opening points or more (12+ pts), you are short in opponent's suit, you have at least three cards in each of the unbid suits.
2. You have 17+ pts with any distribution, and 1NT is not an option.
3. Your opponent bid a major suit and you have 4 cards in the other major suit. With 5+ cards in the other major, it is best to overcall and show your 5-card suit (with 8-16 pts).
4. Your partner opened with a suit, the opponent bid another suit, you are short in both those suits, but you have 4-5 cards in the two unbid suits. This is called a "negative double" showing weakness in the two bid suits, but it is still a Take-out Double. You should have 8+ pts to use this double.
5. You are stuck for a bid, but you know you have enough points to compete. Force partner to bid.

Note: When you use the take-out double with support in the three unbid suits, you can count dummy points because your partner will bid one of those suits. You have support and therefore, your hand will be the dummy. For example: Opponent opens 1♥, you have only 1 heart and 4 cards in each of the other three suits. You can add 2-3 pts for the singleton. So, with that hand and 10+ pts, you can double.

How to Respond to a Take-Out Double by Partner:

1. Bid your best suit out of the three unbid suits, even with 0 points. Partner is forcing you to bid. Trust your partner!
2. If opponent bids in between, you can pass if you have few points.
3. If partner doubles again, without any response from you, consider bidding even with an intervening bid by opponent and even if you have fewer than 6 points. Use your judgment. Partner is showing a very strong hand and the ability to compete if she doubles twice with no response from you.
4. If your best suit is the opponent's suit, consider bidding 1NT. Partner should have good cards in the other three suits and you have stoppers in opponent's suit, so a NT bid is an option. Another option is to leave your partner's double in as a penalty double if you think you can beat the contract.
5. With 0-8 pts, bid your suit at the lowest level possible.
6. With 9+ pts, bid your suit and jump a level.

Note: A double of opponent's game level contract is considered a penalty double. It is not for take-out, unless you and your partner have another agreement. A double before game level is reached should be considered as a take-out double.