

9. Doubles

♠ Doubles

A takeout double can be made after the opponents have opened the bidding. It shows 12+ hcp and at least 3 cards in all of the unbid suits.

Double is written by making an "X" on the bidding pad.

Takeout double (X)

12+ hcp
Support for ALL unbid suits,
Shortage in the opponent's suit

Your right hand opponent opens 1♣. What is your bid?

♠ KQJT 12+ hcp, support for all unbid suits.
♥ KJ6 Double and then pass whatever your
♦ Q832 partner bids.
♣ J7

♠ KQJT8 This time you should simply show
♥ 632 your spade suit with an overcall of 1♠
♦ K8
♣ A74

♠ KQJ You have lots of points, but not
♥ Q9 enough length in the unbid suits
♦ 9842 to do anything. Best to pass
♣ AQ92 and hope your opponents get too high.

♠ AQJT Wow! Double to force your partner
♥ AKQ6 to choose a suit and then leap to
♦ AKQ5 game in whatever partner chooses.
♣ 2

- Overcall with a good suit,
- Double with a good hand



♥ Responses to Takeout Double

You must bid unless the opposition calls before your turn and thus cancels the double. You should bid even if you have no points at all. Remember that partner has promised support for all unbid suits.

Most of the time your partner will not bid again after making a takeout double. Therefore, if you have a reasonable hand yourself it is your responsibility to show your points.

The opening bid is 1♦, partner doubles and the next player passes. What do you bid?

♠ 9763	♠ A763	♠ A763
♥ 62	♥ 62	♥ 62
♦ 7653	♦ K653	♦ 63
♣ 653	♣ Q53	♣ 95432

1♠ (obligatory) 2♠ 1♠ (keep it low!)

♠ 976	♠ A97632	♠ Q63
♥ KJ8	♥ A2	♥ 62
♦ QJ53	♦ K65	♦ AQ53
♣ 653	♣ Q5	♣ AJ32

1NT 4♠ 3NT

♣ Overcall or Double?

You now have two ways of entering the auction after the opponents have opened.

- You can overcall if you have a good 5+ card suit. Remember that points aren't important for an overcall but you do need a good suit.
- The other way of entering the auction is with a double. Points do matter for a double. You should have at least 12 and support for the unbid suits.

This is really important! If your partner doubles then you must bid unless your right hand opponent bids and thus cancels the double. If your partner overcalls then you shouldn't bid unless you have a fit with your partner. You will only need 3 card support to ensure a fit because an overcall promises a 5 card suit.