

Doubles and Overcalls



Doubles and Overcalls Intermediate Series #9

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Take-out Double



The most common double is the "take-out double". The take-out double is made when the opponents have opened the bidding and you have opening count (13+ hcps), shortness in the opponents suit and can "tolerate" any suit bid by partner (at least 3 cards in any unbid major, however the take-out double implies 4 cards in the unbid major). The "take-out double" asks partner to bid their longest suit.

Partner of the take-out double, known as the advancer, bids their longest suit, (but not opener's suit)

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|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 0 - 8 hcps | Bid cheapest level possible |
| 9 - 11 hcps | Jump one level |
| 12+ hcps | Cue-bid the suit being taken out |

The bidder making the "take-out double", has opened the bidding for his side and to bid again, must have either "extra values - 16+ hcps" or partner has to have shown more than a minimum hand by jumping or cue-bidding in response to the take-out double.

The logic is this, if you have only 15 hcps and partner has shown (at most) 8 hcps, partner and you do not have the points for game, therefore attempt to play the contract as low as possible. PASS at your next turn to bid.

Just because you have 13+ hcps and the opponents have opened the bidding, does not mean that you have the appropriate hand for a take-out double. As Bill Treble says in his book, "Getting into the Bidding", "Just because you have 13 hcps doesn't mean that it is your turn to bid."

This bears repeating...Take-out Doubles have 3 qualities (1) opening values - 13+ hcps; (2) shortness in the opponent's suit; and (3) tolerance for any suit that partner may bid. If you have a flat hand and the opponent's suit stopped with 15 - 18 hcps, you can bid 1NT. With a 5 card suit you can overcall. Without any of these criteria, your bid is PASS, unless you have 16+ hcps and a 5+ card suit, then you can take-out double and bid.

Over-calls versus Take-outs

- Overcall with 5 card suits
- Take-out Double with 4 card suits

With a 5 card un-bid suit and 7 - 16 hcps

Overcall by bidding your suit - do not jump (jumping is weak)

With 15 - 18 hcps and (1) a flat hand, (2) no un-bid 5 card major, (3) the opponents suit stopped - BID 1NT

The bidding range for an over-call is wide (7 to 16 or 17) hcps, therefore partner must conserve bidding space when the over-caller has bid with light values.

Partner of the over-caller (advancer) makes a simple raise with 6 - 10 hcps with 3+ card support; Cue-bids the overcalled suit with 11+ hcps and 3+ card support. Over-caller places the contract.

Without support, advancer should have 10+ hcps to name a new suit.

With a 4 card un-bid major and tolerance for all un-bid suits - Double (X) (Take-out)

It is imperative that advancer bid their longest suit in response to a take-out double with a weak hand (as few as zero points), the weaker the hand, the more likely that the opponent will make their contract. There is no such thing as "I was too weak to bid" in response to a take-out double, unless RHO has bid, then a free bid by the advancer shows 6 - 8 hcps. NT denies an un-bid 4 card suit and shows the opponents' suits to be well stopped.

Jordan Convention - When partner has opened 1♥/♠ and your Right Hand Opponent (RHO) doubles (X):

- 2NT by responder is a limit raise 11+ hcps (rather than 12+ game forcing as in Jacoby 2NT)
- With 12/13 hcps opener rebids 3♥/♠
- With 14/15 hcps opener rebids 4♥/♠

When opener has rebid 3 of their major, Responder PASS with a minimal 10/11 hcps limit raise or place the contract in game with anything extra.

With no fit for partner's major and 10+ hcps - Redouble (XX)

When partner has opened a minor, with 6 - 9 hcps, ignore the double and bid your major, even if only a 4 card suit.

With no 4+ card major and no minor fit, bid 1NT with 6 - 9 hcps.

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| #4 - Defense | #14 - Flannery |
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THE ROAD TO HELL IS PAVED WITH GOOD CONVENTIONS



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Doubles and Overcalls

One No Trump Overcalls



One No Trump (overcall)

A normal 1 No Trump is 15 - 17 hcps, a 1NT overcall is 16-18 hcps with the suit bid well stopped (2 stoppers) and a flat hand, the same as a 1NT opener. It is common to bid 1NT with a good 15 hcps as declarer

It is common to bid 1NT with a good 15 hcps, as declarer, if your partner should raise you to game, you will know where all the points are at the table. Why is this? If opener has 13 hcps, you have 16 hcps and your partner raises you to game with 9+, simple math reveals that your left hand opponent (LHO) has at most a queen. You know how to take every finesse and who to end play.

Systems "on"

It is recommended that **Stayman** and **Transfers** be "on" when overcalling 1NT. However, responder should lower the point requirements by 1 hcp as only 7 hcps are needed for game opposite a maximum 16-18 1NT overcall.

Since the overcall of 1NT is 1 hcp higher, the response requirement by partner is 1 hcp less.

1 No Trump Overcall shows (15/16 - 18 hcps) with the suit bid well stopped.

Double and then bidding 1 No Trump over your partner's bid is stronger (19 - 21 hcps)

Double and then cue-bidding the take-out suit shows 22+ hcps and not well stopped, a jump in No Trump shows 22+ hcps and well stopped.

Distributional Overcalls

When the opponents have opened the bidding and you are dealt 5/5 or better distribution, you want to show your hand by bidding your suits, but how do you show the strength?

With either less than opening count (5 - 11 hcps) or with 16+ hcps bid the "**Unusual No Trump**" (a jump to 2NT) to show the lower 2 un-bid suits or cue-bid "**Michaels**" to show the higher 2 un-bid suits.

Just like with the **take-out double**, when you double and bid showing 16+ hcps, when you make an Unusual No Trump or Michaels take-out and then bid you also show 16+ hcps. On the other hand, when you pass, you show less than opening count values with distribution.

Opening count values (12 - 15 hcps)

Overcall your higher ranking suit and re-bid the second suit in an attempt to find a fit. Do not use Unusual NT or Michaels.

Over-calls

At the ONE Level	7+ hcps (with AK in suit bid)
At the TWO Level	12+ hcps

Over-calls have length and strength in the suit bid. Overcalls at the one level are lead directive and when hcps are dispersed throughout the hand, the overcall needs to be stronger.

The Penalty Double (X)

As a rule - if partner has bid a suit, a double by advancer is penalty, if partner has not bid, the double is take-out; with the exception of NEGATIVE doubles and RESPONSIVE doubles.

If the opponents have bid 3 suits, double is penalty as you cannot take-out for 1 suit. There must be at least 2 un-bid suits for a take-out double. (Exception for major at 1 level.)

Once NT has been bid, doubles tend to be penalty and are not take-out. An exception applies when playing a conventional overcall of an opening 1 NT, where double often shows a single suit or a strong hand or the responder to the NT opener is playing "Stolen Bid".

Negative Doubles

Negative Doubles are generally low level doubles and show the un-bid suits when partner has opened the bidding and your RHO has over-called and taken away a bid that you would have made.

As an example, partner opens 1 of a minor and your RHO over-calls 1♠. You have 6+ hcps and 4♥, you would have bid 1♥, but you do not have the 5♥ and 10 hcps necessary to bid at the 2 level and say 2♥, therefore you have lost your bid. Double by you says "Partner I have at least 4♥ and 6+ hcps, but I do not have 5♥ and 10+ hcps, do you have 4♥ too?" This way the ♥ suit is not lost in the auction by interference of the opponents.

In another example, partner opens 1 of a minor and your RHO over-calls 1♥. You have 6+ hcps and 4♠, you would like to tell your partner that you have only 4♠ and not 5♠. Double by you says "Partner have only 4♠, if I had 5♠ I would have bid 1♠ over the opponents 1♥ bid."

Negative Doubles apply to all interference up to 2♠, at this time (more experienced partnerships will play negative doubles thru 3♠)

Responsive Doubles

Responsive Doubles are when the opponents have opened the bidding, your partner over-calls and RESPONDER RAISES. There are two un-bid suits in the auction.

A responsive double denies support for partner's over-call and says that you have good values (10ish) hcps and good distribution (at least 4/4) in the un-bid suits.

As my partner, Winston Gokavi says "You can bid hands with distribution (such as a long suit) and few or no points and you can bid hands with lots of points and no distribution, but you cannot bid hands with no distribution and few or no points. Pass is oftentimes the best bid." Responsive Doubles are often-times misused.

As an example, your LHO opens 1♣; your partner over-calls 1♠ and RHO bids 3♣ (pre-emptive). You have 10 hcps with 2♠, 4♥, 5♦ and 2♣. You would like to show your partner both ♦ and ♥, but you don't have the points or length to be bidding freely at the 3 level. The Responsive Double says "Partner, I have at least 4♥ and 4♦, I have the points to bid (10+ hcps), but not enough high card points to force to game and I can tolerate your suit (I have 2, but not 3) if you don't have a fit for either of my 2 suits, re-bid your suit".

Responsive Doubles apply to all interference up to 3♦, at this time (more experienced partnerships will play negative doubles thru 4♦)