

Responding To A Takeout Double

When our partner makes a takeout double we should remember that they have shortage in the opponents' suit, tolerance for all of the other suits and enough points that they would have bid if the opponents hadn't (assume it's between twelve and fifteen High Card Points). What should we do in this situation? As ever, our action will depend on whether we think we have any chance of making game.

What do we do with weak hands (0-10 HCP)?

Assuming our Right Hand Opponent passes, it is important that we bid *something*! If we pass, it is very likely Declarer will make their doubled contract and get a very, very good score. With a weak hand we should just bid our suit at the cheapest level. Imagine our LHO opened One Diamond and partner doubled. RHO passes and we hold:

♠ AT982	♠ T87	♠ Q874	♠ Q85
♥ 54	♥ 64	♥ Q874	♥ 943
♦ 32	♦ 982	♦ 5	♦ KT82
♣ 9754	♣ T8742	♣ T987	♣ Q53
Bid 1 Spade	Bid 2 Clubs	Bid 1 Heart	Bid 1 No Trump

As you can see, even with very, very bad hands we have to bid something. If we have the opponents' suit and around 6-10 HCPs we should bid No Trumps at the cheapest level we can.

What do we do with good hands (11-12 HCP)?

With these sorts of hands we *might* make game. We should still bid our suit but now (if Right Hand Opponent passes) we should *jump* in our suit to show our partner we are not just bidding because we have to. Here let's assume LHO opened One Diamond, Our Partner doubled, RHO passed and we are holding the following:

♠ AT742	♠ JT7	♠ 9863	♠ Q53
♥ K98	♥ 3	♥ AQJ62	♥ JT3
♦ 42	♦ 963	♦ K6	♦ AK6
♣ QT5	♣ AKT942	♣ 62	♣ JT86
Bid 2 Spades	Bid 3 Clubs	Bid 2 hearts	Bid 2 No Trumps

By jumping, we are inviting our partner to bid game if she has fourteen or fifteen HCPs. Remember, she can count distribution if we find a fit so Game is still possible.

What do we do with very good hands (13+ HCP)?

When our partner doubles and we have an opening bid of our own, it is likely that this hand belongs to us, even though they opened the bidding. Here we should bid game. Don't be scared, trust that your partner has got what they promised with their double! Once again imagine that LHO opened One Diamond, partner doubled and RHO passed to us:

♠ AKT93	♠ K93	♠ AQ2	♠ KT2
♥ KJ2	♥ KQJT	♥ K9	♥ Q65
♦ 9862	♦ J2	♦ 4	♦ AQT2
♣ Q	♣ QJ32	♣ KJT8742	♣ A74
Bid 4 Spades	Bid 4 Hearts	Bid 5 Clubs	Bid 3 No Trumps

If you are unsure of the best fit but have the opponents' suit well stopped, consider bidding Three No Trumps. When playing it, you will at least know which opponent has all the points!