

§27. The Contested Auction. Take-out Doubles

Notes on the basic principles to be taught in this section.

- This chapter is all about take-out Doubles and how to handle them.
- The emphasis is on take-out Doubles being *shape-specific*. One example of an approved take-out Double is a 4-4-4-1 hand with only 10 points. Shape is often more important than strength.
- The action of “responder” is discussed as well, with a jump response indicating roughly 8-11 points.

Four hands need setting up (overleaf); none is a full deal. Three of the West hands (in “Hands” 1, 2 and 3) are irrelevant and have been greyed out.

“**Hand**” 1 contains three examples of take-out Doubles.

The North, East and South cards correspond to Examples 1, 2 and 3 in the student notes.

Over an opening bid of 1♦ North would Double; Over an opening bid of 1♠ East would Double and over an opening bid of 1♥ South would Double.

“**Hand**” 2 contains two examples of take-out Doubles and one where a 14-count would Pass.

The North, East and South cards correspond to Examples 4, 5 and 6 in the student notes.

Over an opening bid of 1♦ North would Double. Not ideal with a 4-3-3-3 pattern, but the hand is too good to Pass. Over an opening bid of 1♣ East is worth a take-out Double, despite the lack of values. The excellent pattern (4-4-4-1) makes up for having only 10 points, there being the strong likelihood of a decent trump fit.

South should Pass over 1♣ or 1♦, despite holding 14 points. Many students will want to bid 1NT; many will want to bid simply, “because I have 14 points”. **Press home the point that you should Pass if the enemy bid one of your long suits.**

“**Hand**” 3 contains three examples of keeping quiet after an opening bid on the right.

The North, East and South cards correspond to Examples 7, 8 and 9 in the student notes.

Over an opening bid of 1♠ North should Pass (rapidly and in an even tempo). There is simply nothing else to do. Over an opening bid of 1♣ (or 1♦) East has nothing to say. Overcalling 1♣ with 1♦ on a lousy suit is a real no-no. Over an opening bid of 1♦ (or 1♣) South has nowhere to go. Pass and await developments. Overcalling 1♦ with 2♣ on a feeble five-card suit is not on in any circumstances.

“**Hand**” 4 contains four examples of responses to a take-out Double.

The North, East South and West cards correspond to Examples 10, 11, 12 and 13 in the student notes.

After partner has Doubled 1♥, North has a rubbish-dump of a hand that, nonetheless, must respond 1♠. This attempts to establish the principle that a minimum response promises *nothing*. Thus, East must not respond 2♥ after partner has Doubled 1♠. With five Hearts and 15 points it is best to bid 4♥ directly. **If you don't have nothing, you have to show it.**

South makes a jump bid of 2♠ after a Double of 1♣. This is not-forcing but shows around about 8-11 points. West jumps to 3NT after a Double of 1♦. The hand has 15 points and a double Diamond stopper, so should be secure.

Example 14 in the student notes does not appear in the prepared hands overleaf; it shows another jump to game after a take-out Double of 1♥.

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