

FAQ: What sort of hand is needed to make a takeout double in the immediate seat?

- A minimum opening hand with the right shape. The *right* shape means support for *all* the unbid suits, especially majors. The doubler won't bid again OR
- A strong opening hand with the right shape. The doubler will raise partner's minimum response. OR
- A one suited hand with 16+ HCP. Here, the doubler will rebid in his own suit to show a hand too strong to make a simple overcall. OR
- A balanced hand with 19+ HCP. Here, the doubler will rebid in NT to show a hand too strong to overcall 1NT (15 – 18 HCP)

FAQ: What will the doubler NOT have?

- The doubler will not have length in the enemy suit.
 - The doubler will not have an ordinary opening hand
- With these problems, you must pass – smoothly. Partner will take action if it is appropriate. There are lots of opening hands in the range 12 – 14 HCP which do not qualify for a takeout double in the immediate seat. The “immediate” seat is the seat immediately after the opening bidder. e.g. (1H) – X

If you follow these guidelines, we say that our takeout doubles are “disciplined”. Experienced players will not even discuss this – they will assume disciplined takeout doubles. This means that partner bid their hand more accurately.

FAQ: How do we respond to (1B) – X – (P) – ?

- Suit bids show 0 – 9 TP. Total Points (TP) are the sum of HCP and Shape Points (SP) using the 5 (void), 3 (singleton), 1 (doubleton) scale. With a choice of four card suits, always prefer the major unless VERY weak and you can bid a minor more cheaply.
- 1NT response shows 5 – 9 HCP, their suit stopped and no interest in another suit. With 0 – 4 HCP and nothing but their suit, you need to bid a *three* card suit. Don't pass! The weaker you are, the more likely they are to make their doubled contract.
- Jump in your suit 10 + TP. This is forcing for one round. Count SP, even when bidding a 4 card suit. Remember, you are entitled to presume a 4-4 fit in the majors. With a minor, be a little more conservative. The double may have only 3 card support.
- 2NT (10 – 12 HCP) and 3NT (13 – 15 HCP) with their suit well stopped are NOT what the doubler wants to hear. He hoped to hear a major from you. However, he can live with it. Usually, these bids will deny a 4 card major. However, with excessive values in their suit, NT bids are still considered. If the doubler plans to move again, he can cue bid their suit as Stayman.
- Cue bid their suit. e.g. (1m) – X – (P) – 2m. This form of torture is used when it is unclear where we should be playing. Commonly, the 2m bidder will have *both* majors and be unwilling to select the wrong one, probably at the 4 level!. It may also indicate doubt about a NT contract because the

stopper may not be enough. Usually, the 2m bid is forcing to game.

FAQ: What do we do when the next hand bids?

- (1B) – X – (2B) – ?

This is a common situation and their 2B response can be quite weak. Any bid made here is called a *Free Bid*. i.e. You are not obliged to bid.

- 1..With 0-5, you will *pass*. However, we don't want them to buy the contract too cheaply.
- 2..Make a *non-jump suit bid* with 6 – 10.
- 3..*Double* is called a responsive double. This asks partner to select a suit, particularly a major. If they had opened 1M, the responsive double shows just 3 of the other major. With 4 of them, you would be bidding the major yourself.

- (1B) – X – (XX) – ?

Usually, the redouble shows 10+ HCP and no fit with partner. It suggests penalties if we bid too high. In this sequence, the whole world knows you have a terrible hand. It seems logical to pass and let partner get us out of this mess, doesn't it? Not so. If we can make a very cheap bid that occupies little space, we should make it. Otherwise, we pass and partner pulls the redouble. His first suit may be higher than where we could be. Remember, we are trying to get out of this mess undoubled. e.g.

(1D) – X – XX – ? Bid a 4 card heart suit if you don't want to hear partner bid 1S when he has 3 hearts and 4 spades.

(1S) – X – XX – ? Bid 2C if you have them and can't stand the thought of partner bidding hearts.

FAQ: What do we do if next hand changes suit?

- e.g. (1C) – X – (1S) – ?

Sometimes, the 1S bid will be a denial of 10+ HCP and is not forcing. Such an agreement should be alerted.

- *Pass* when the shape and strength are not right.
- Here, a *suit bid* will be 5 – 9 TP and a 5 carder.
- 1NT should be 5 – 9 with opener's suit stopped.
- *Double* will be responsive, certainly showing hearts and asking the doubler for more information.
- 2C or 2S will be *stopper asks*.

FAQ: Are our actions the same if the doubler is already a passed hand?

Absolutely not. Don't punish partner for getting us into the auction. His doubles will be great shape and a near opening hand. Bid quietly.

FAQ: Are our actions the same if the double comes from the reopening seat?

- e.g. (1B) – P – (P) – X
(P) – ?

No. This will be covered in *lesson 27*. For now, just remember that doubler's shape may not be all that great and the HCP count could be a little low. The doubler may already be presuming that you have some values. Be wary of jumping, especially in NT.