

Takeout Doubles – Ron Kral

Vul None West deals Lead: ♥6	♠ 10 ♥ KQ98 ♦ K1082 ♣ KJ93	♠ K72 ♥ J10 ♦ 7543 ♣ 8742	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>DBL¹</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥²</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥³</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South	1♠	DBL ¹	Pass	3♥ ²	Pass	4♥ ³	Pass	Pass	Pass			
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♠ AJ984 ♥ 65 ♦ AJ9 ♣ A106	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q653 ♥ A7432 ♦ Q6 ♣ Q5	<p>¹ Opening hand with 4 hearts, tolerance for clubs and diamonds.</p> <p>² Invitational to game – about 10-12 HCP.</p> <p>³ Upgrade the hand since it has perfect distribution, distributional points, a trump fit, and partner knows where all the defensive high cards are.</p> <p>Four hearts makes easily, losing only the 3 aces. South wins 5 hearts, 2 spade ruffs, 1 diamond and 2 clubs.</p>							
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Takeout doubles were one of the very first bridge conventions ever invented. They've been around nearly 100 years (the story is that they were first used in 1913 in auction bridge). The word "takeout" comes from the fact that the partner of the doubler "takes out" the double by bidding. A takeout double is used after the opponents open the bidding. Takeout doubles are a way to compete in the auction when it's unclear which pair "owns" the hand. I've discovered that takeout doubles are one of the most misunderstood and abused conventions. In a nutshell, the rules for a takeout double are as follows:

- 1) The takeout doubler is **SHORT** in the opponent's suit(s). That is, the takeout doubler typically has only 1 or 2 cards in the opponent's suit(s) and has an **UNBALANCED** hand, **NOT** 4/3/3/3. A takeout double "bids" several suits at once.
- 2) The takeout doubler has **TOLERANCE** (at least 2-card support) for **ALL** unbid suits. There are specific exceptions.
- 3) The takeout doubler has an **OPENING HAND** – 12+ "dummy" points including distribution.
- 4) A takeout double of a MAJOR suit virtually **GUARANTEES** 4 cards in the OTHER major.

These "rules" are flexible to some extent. Here are the exceptions:

- 1) A takeout doubler MAY have as many as THREE cards in an opponent's suit, BUT, in that case, the takeout doubler has BETTER than an opening hand. Normally the takeout doubler **DOES NOT** have a singleton or void in an unbid suit. **THE MORE BALANCED THE HAND, THE MORE POINTS THE TAKEOUT DOUBLER MUST HAVE!**
- 2) When doubling a major, the takeout doubler GUARANTEES support for the OTHER major, but not necessarily support for BOTH minors. Exception: when the takeout doubler has 17+HCP.
- 3) The takeout doubler may have as few as 10 HCP holding "perfect" distribution – that is, 4/4/4/1 or 4/4/5/0. The more balanced the hand, the more HCP are needed to make a takeout double (4/3/3/3 should be about 15+HCP).
- 4) SOMETIMES (rarely!), a takeout double of a major suit is made with only THREE cards in the other major. This is done ONLY in experienced partnerships where partner is happy to play in a 4/3 fit, and the takeout doubler has extra values.
- 5) Do NOT make a takeout double with lots of points in the opponent's suit(s). Overcall 1NT or plan to defend.

Responses to a takeout double

The takeout doubler's partner MUST bid (EVEN WITH 0 POINTS!) unless his RHO bids in front of him. Here's how:

0-8 HCP – make the minimum bid possible in one of "our" suits. Eg. 1♥ – DBL – PASS – 1♠

9-10 HCP – make a single level skip bid in one of "our" suits. Eg. 1♥ – DBL – PASS – 2♠

11-12 HCP – make a double level skip bid in one of "our" suits. Eg. 1♥ – DBL – PASS – 3♠

13+HCP – make a triple level skip bid (to game) in one of "our" suits. Eg. 1♥ – DBL – PASS 4♠, **OR**, cue-bid their suit.

With 7+HCP and a stopper in the opponent's suit(s), you may bid 1NT. **NEVER** BID NT WITH LESS THAN 7 HCP!

With 11-12 HCP and a stopper in the opponent's suit(s), you may bid 2NT (but bid the other major with 4-card support).

With 13+HCP and a stopper in the opponent's suit(s), you may bid 3NT (but bid the other major with 4-card support).

- If responder bids after the takeout double, the doubler's partner is "off the hook", but should almost always bid anyway with 6-8 HCP and support for one of the doubler's suits to show the "high end" of the 0-8 HCP range.
- A redouble does NOT take advancer off the hook UNLESS advancer has no preference what suit the doubler bids.
- With 15-18 HCP and a stopper in the opponent's bid suit(s), bid 1NT **INSTEAD** of making a takeout double.
- With 19-21 HCP and stoppers in the opponent's bid suit(s) make a takeout double, then rebid 1NT showing a hand too good to simply overcall 1NT (this says "I can play 1NT opposite 0 HCP").
- With 22+HCP, make a takeout double and then cue-bid the opponent's suit (partner, I have a **BIG** 2♣ opening hand!).
- With 18+HCP and a 5+card suit, you can make a takeout double, then bid your OWN suit on the next round.

Takeout Doubles – Ron Kral

Takeout Double Rules (when making a takeout double)

- 1) A takeout double shows an opening Hand (12+HCP). May be less (10 HCP with “perfect” distribution – 4/4/4/1 or 5/4/4/0). Requires more (13+HCP) with 4/3/3/3 distribution and/or length in the opponent’s bid suit. A takeout double bids more than 1 suit at once.
- 2) Prefer to make a 1NT overcall instead of a takeout double with 15-18 and a stopper in their suit. This will get you to the right contract more often. NOTE: ALL systems are ON over 1NT overcalls (e.g., Stayman, Transfers, et. al.). It’s as if the opening bid never happened.
- 3) Tolerance for ALL unbid suits - **NO** singletons in an unbid suit. **NO** doubletons in an unbid major. With the wrong distribution, just pass for now. Exception: Holding more than 17+HCP, you **must** start with a double regardless of your distribution. Overcalls top out at 16 HCP.
- 4) Takeout doubles revolve around the majors:
 - a. When you double a major, you virtually GUARANTEE 4 cards in the other major.
 - b. When you double a minor, you should have 4/3 or better in the majors.
 - c. When you double a minor, you usually have 3 (**may** be only 2) of the other minor.
- 5) Takeout doubles DO NOT apply over 1NT opening bids. A double of 1NT is PENALTY (unless you’re playing a convention like DONT).
- 6) A takeout double may still be made on the 2nd round of bidding after an initial PASS.
- 7) A **BALANCING** double needs about 9 HCP – one King **less** than a **TAKEOUT** double.

Takeout Double Responses (responding to a takeout double)

- 1) Always prefer to bid a major if you have 4+cards (do not respond 1NT).
- 2) You **MUST** bid if RHO passes.
- 3) You **MAY** bid if RHO bids (your “free bid” shows about 5-8 HCP).
- 4) You **SHOULD** bid if RHO redoubles (unless you REALLY don’t have a suit preference).
- 5) A minimum level bid shows 0-8 HCP.
- 6) A 1 level jump (e.g. 2♠) shows 9-10 HCP.
- 7) A 2 level jump (e.g. 3♠) shows 11-12 HCP.
- 8) A 3 level jump (e.g. 4♠, game) shows 13+HCP (just bid it!).
- 9) 1NT shows 8-9 HCP w/o a major suit (VERY occasionally as little as 6 HCP, **NEVER** less).
- 10) 2NT shows 10-12 HCP without a 4-card major suit and a stopper in their suit(s).
- 11) 3NT shows 13+HCP without a 4-card major suit and a stopper in their suit(s).
- 12) Cuebidding the opponent’s suit shows a good hand (at least game invitational – about 11-12 HCP) and tells the takeout doubler “You Pick”. e.g. 1♦-DBL-P-4♦ = 4♥+4♠ +13 HCP

Takeout Doubler Rebids (rebids by the takeout doubler)

- 1) An advance by the takeout doubler after a minimum response is game invitational (shows a minimum of 17 HCP). Exception: Competitive bids don’t show extras.
- 2) A jump advance by the takeout doubler shows a fit and about 22+HCP.
- 3) Doubling then bidding your own suit shows 17-21 HCP and a 5+card suit. Exception: If you’re playing “equal conversion” you can sometimes rebid a minor at the 2-level w/o 17+.
- 4) Doubling then cue bidding the opponent’s suit shows a 2♣ opening bid (22+HCP).
- 5) Doubling then bidding 1NT shows 19-21 HCP with a stopper in the opponent’s suit(s).
- 6) A 2nd double after the first with no response is **ALSO** for **TAKEOUT**, **NOT** PENALTY.