

LESSON 8

Takeout Doubles and Advances



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

The Bidding

Doubling for takeout

The overcall is used when you want to compete and you have a suit to show partner. Another way to compete is to use the takeout double. This double tells partner you want to compete but asks partner to choose the strain. In order for a double to be for takeout:

1. Neither the doubler nor doubler's partner have previously bid (previous passes are okay).
2. The opposing partnership has bid either one or two suits (notrump is not a suit).
3. It is either the doubler's first or second turn to bid.

Otherwise, a double is for penalty.

Requirements for a takeout double

To make a takeout double, you need support for all of the unbid suits, ideally four-card support, especially in the unbid major suit(s). You also need at least the strength for an opening bid (13 or more total points). However, when valuing your hand, you use dummy points.

The takeout doublers also can have a different type of hand – a hand with 18+ total points which is too strong for a simple overcall.

Advancing after a takeout double

A takeout double is forcing and asks the advancer to bid a suit — other than the one bid by the opponent(s). Assuming no interference from the opponents, the advancer bids as follows:

0 to 8 total points

The advancer bids a four-card or longer unbid major suit at the cheapest level. With no major suit, the advancer bids a four-card or longer unbid minor suit.

9 to 11 total points

The advancer jumps in a four-card or longer unbid major suit. With no major suit, the advancer jumps in a four-card or longer unbid minor suit.

12 or more total points

The advancer jumps to game in a four-card or longer unbid major suit. The advancer also can use the cuebid to ascertain the best strain.

Notrump advances after a takeout double

- 1 NT 8-10 HCP at least one stopper in the opponent's suit.
- 2NT 11-12 HCP at least one stopper in the opponent's suit.
- 3 NT 13 HCP or more and at least one stopper in the opponent's suit.

Rebids by the takeout doubler

If the advancer makes a minimum bid, the takeout doubler passes with a minimum hand (13 to 15 total points), raises with a medium hand (16 to 18 total points) and jump raises with a maximum hand (19 to 21 total points).

The Play

Making a plan

Declarer should always go through a four-step plan when dummy comes down.

1. Determine the number of tricks needed to make the contract (objective).
2. Determine the number of sure tricks.
3. Determine how additional tricks can be developed (through promotion, length, the finesse and by ruffing).
4. Decide how to put it all together (choose among the alternatives, watch your entries, etc.).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

“In the last lesson, we saw one of the ways you can compete when an opponent opens the bidding — by using the overcall. To overcall, you need a five-card or longer suit and approximately the values for an opening bid. We will look at another way to compete.

“Everyone take one suit and construct the following hand on the table:

♠ A 10 7 3
♥ A 9 8 4
♦ 5
♣ A Q 9 4

“What would you do with this hand if you were the dealer? (Open 1♣.) Suppose, however, the opponent on your right is the dealer and opens 1♦. What are your thoughts?”

Most of the students will want to do something because they have an opening bid. Some will suggest overcalling — remind them that a five-card or longer suit is required. Also point out that, even if we wanted to overcall, it would be difficult to decide which suit. For example, if we bid hearts, partner may have two little hearts and five little spades. We would be in the wrong trump suit. But if we bid spades or clubs, partner might have hearts.

“We would like to compete, but we don’t know which suit to compete in. Who should choose the trump suit for our side? (Partner.) We want to make a call that says we want to compete but we want partner to choose the suit. How can we give partner this message?”

The students will make a couple of suggestions — frequently, 1NT will be mentioned. Usually, someone will have read ahead or heard of the situation and will suggest a double.

“The advantage of the double is that it doesn’t take up any bidding room. Partner can still bid 1♥, 1♠ or 2♣, depending on the suit partner prefers. Used in this sense, the double is called a takeout double. It asks partner to take the double out by bidding one of the other suits.

“In the last lesson, we discussed using a penalty double when we don’t think the opponents can make their contract. We say ‘double.’ How does partner know when we mean it as a takeout double and when we mean it as a penalty double? We have to have some agreement with our partner. Let’s see how this works.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

EXERCISE ONE: Takeout or Penalty?

Introduction

“Our agreement is that a double is for takeout if neither you nor partner has made a call other than pass on your first or second turn to bid and the contract is a partscore in a suit. Otherwise, it’s a penalty double.”

While this doesn’t cover all possible agreements, it’s a sound starting point. It’s not really necessary to get involved in delayed doubles or doubles of 1NT opening bids. Ask the students why it wouldn’t be a good idea to double for penalty at a low level — the opponents will be warned and might run to another suit, you may not defeat the contract, etc.

Instructions

“In the following auctions, is West’s double for takeout or penalty?”

- | | | | | |
|----|-------|------|-------|-------------------|
| 1. | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
| | Pass | Pass | 1 ♦ | Double (Takeout.) |
| 2. | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
| | 1 ♣ | Pass | 1 ♥ | Double (Takeout.) |
| 3. | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
| | Pass | Pass | 1NT | Double (Penalty.) |
| 4. | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | WEST |
| | Pass | Pass | 1 ♥ | Pass |
| | 2 ♥ | Pass | 4 ♥ | Double (Penalty.) |

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

Conclusion

“A double can have two distinct meanings. A double of a partscore contract when neither you nor partner has bid is for takeout. Otherwise, it’s for penalty.”

EXERCISE TWO: The Takeout Double

Introduction

“Now that we have seen that a double can mean ‘Partner, please bid your best suit,’ what do we need to make a takeout double? What do you think the requirements are?”

Refer the students to the hand they constructed. The students will conclude that they need shortness in the opponent’s suit and an opening bid.

“To make a takeout double, you need support for whichever suit partner picks. Ideally, you should have four-card support for each unbid suit, but you won’t always get such a perfect hand. Since partner will prefer to bid a major suit if partner has one, you should have four-card support for the unbid major suit(s) most of the time. However, you can have only three-card support for one of the minor suits. The stronger your hand, the less perfect your shape has to be.

“Since partner is going to pick the suit, who will be the dummy? (The takeout doubler.) Therefore, the hand held by the takeout doubler can be valued using dummy points — 5 for a void, 3 for a singleton, 1 for a doubleton.”

Instructions

“The opponent on your right bids 1♥. Using dummy points to determine the value of your hand, decide whether you would make a takeout double with the following hands.”

1) ♠ J 8 4 3
♥ 10 9
♦ K Q 7
♣ A Q 10 2

2) ♠ A Q 4 3
♥ 8
♦ A 7 3 2
♣ J 4 3 2

3) ♠ K 9 6 3
♥ —
♦ K 9 8 7 2
♣ A 8 7 3

HCPs 12

Dummy points 1

Total points 13

Bid Double

HCPs 11

Dummy points 3

Total points 14

Bid Double

HCPs 10

Dummy points 5

Total points 15

Bid Double

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

Conclusion

“There are two requirements for a takeout double — support for the unbid suits and the values for an opening bid, with dummy points used in the valuation.”

EXERCISE THREE: Choosing the Competitive Action

Introduction

“To enter the auction after one of your opponents has opened the bidding, you can overcall or double. Don’t forget 1NT can be an overcall if you have the right hand — balanced with 15 to 18 HCP and a stopper in the opponent’s suit.

“There is one other type of hand to think about. Remember, our overcalls are based upon a five-card suit with 8 to 16 HCP (10-17 total points). But what happens if your hand is 18 total points with a five-card suit and not suitable for a takeout double? To accommodate this type of hand, we will begin with a takeout double and then name our suit after the advancer bids. By starting with a takeout double and then naming your own suit, you show a hand that is stronger than a simple overcall.”

Instructions

“What would you do with each of the following hands if the opponent on your right bids 1♣?”

1) ♠ A J 10 6 3
♥ 4 3
♦ K 9 3
♣ K Q 3

Bid 1♠

2) ♠ A J 5 3
♥ Q 10 8 6
♦ K J 4 2
♣ 9

Bid Double

3) ♠ Q J 10
♥ A J 4 3
♦ K 10 2
♣ A K 6

Bid 1NT

4) ♠ A 3
♥ A Q 8 6 3
♦ K J 9 5 2
♣ 4

Bid 1♥

5) ♠ A 8
♥ A K J 10 9 3
♦ A Q 3
♣ 8 5

Bid Double

6) ♠ Q 7 5
♥ A J
♦ Q 9 7 4
♣ K Q 8 3

Bid Pass

(then show hearts)

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise. The students may not remember to overcall 1NT with the third hand. Point out how much more descriptive this bid is than making a takeout double, especially with only three-card support for two of the unbid suits. The students should understand the reasons for passing with the last hand.

Conclusion

“When an opponent opens the bidding and you have an opening bid, you can compete with an overcall if you have a five-card or longer suit. If you have support for all of the unbid suits, you can make a takeout double. With 15 to 18 HCP, a balanced hand, and strength in the opponent’s suit, you can overcall 1NT. If your hand doesn’t fit any of this criteria, you should pass. By making a takeout double and then bidding a new suit, you show a hand too good for a single overcall (18 or more total points).”

EXERCISE FOUR: Advancing After a Takeout Double with 0 to 8 Total Points

Introduction

“Let’s go to the other side of the table and see what we do when partner makes a takeout double. Take the hand we constructed earlier and place it face down to one side of the table. Construct the following hand:

♠ 8 6 4 2
♥ 7 5 2
♦ J 8 4
♣ 10 3 2

“When we pick up a hand like this, we expect no worries. We don’t have to open the bidding, and if partner opens the bidding, we plan to pass. But that was before today’s lesson. The opponent on our left opens the bidding 1♦, and our partner brings out a newfangled weapon and doubles. The opponent on our right passes. What are we going to do?”

Most of the students will want to pass and some will want to bid 1♠. Ask what will happen if we pass. The students will comment that the other opponent will pass, and the contract will be 1♦ doubled. Ask what will happen in that contract, noting that partner is very short in diamonds. The students will conclude that the contract will probably make with two or three overtricks. Point out that this will be quite expensive.

Then ask what would happen if we bid 1♠. Most students will be afraid of being left in 1♠ or being doubled for penalty. Now is a good time to have them turn the previous hand they constructed face up:

♠ A 10 7 3
♥ A 9 8 4
♦ 5
♣ A Q 9 4

By looking at each suit, the students can see how many tricks they might lose: two in spades (if the suit breaks 3–2); two in hearts; one in diamonds (because of the singleton in dummy); and one or two in clubs (declarer will be able to try the club finesse). The point is not to show them that 1♠ will actually make but to ease their fear by showing that bidding 1♠ wouldn’t be as bad as passing. Also, point out that the opponents have the balance of strength and quite likely will bid on to their own contract.

“Partner’s takeout double is forcing and asks us to pick a suit. We should do so even with a very weak hand. The only time we can pass is if the opponent on our right bids or we want to defend 1♦ doubled (not very likely since partner is short in diamonds).

“Let’s replace the ♠4 and ♠2 in the advancer’s hand with the ♠K Q and the ♥2 with the ♥Q:

♠ K Q 8 6
 ♥ Q 7 5
 ♦ J 8 4
 ♣ 10 3 2

“Now how would we feel about bidding 1 ♠? (More confident.) In fact, what would we do if the opponent on our right raised opener’s suit to 2 ♦?”

Most of the students will conclude that the advancer should bid 2 ♠, since partner has asked the advancer to compete and the advancer’s side has enough combined strength to compete to the two level. Again, by referring to doubler’s hand, we can see that the prospects of making 2 ♠ are excellent — better than defending 2 ♦.

“When the advancer has a weak or minimum hand of 0 to 8 total points, the advancer usually bids a suit at the cheapest level following partner’s takeout double. Since the partnership is still interested in finding a Golden Fit in a major suit, the advancer should prefer bidding a four-card major suit to a minor suit. The 1NT advance after a takeout double is a constructive bid suggesting 8-10 HCP and at least one stopper in the opponent’s suit.”

Instructions

“Your left-hand opponent opens the bidding 1 ♠ and your partner doubles. What do you bid with each of the following hands?”

1) ♠ 9 8
♥ Q 10 5 3
♦ K J 7 2
♣ 8 7 2

Bid 2♥

2) ♠ J 10
♥ K 3
♦ Q J 10 8 4
♣ 8 6 5 3

Bid 2♦

3) ♠ A J 9 3
♥ K 10 5
♦ J 4 2
♣ 10 9 6

Bid 1NT

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise. On the second hand, point out that the advancer would consider bidding 3 ♦ if the opponent on the right raised to 2 ♠. On the first hand, however, the advancer wouldn’t bid if the right-hand opponent bid. The students will likely conclude for themselves that 1NT is the correct bid on the last hand.

Conclusion

“When partner makes a takeout double, the advancer with a hand worth 0 to 8 total points must bid something if the right-hand opponent (RHO) passes. The advancer should bid a four-card or longer major suit at the cheapest level or a four-card or longer minor suit at the cheapest level. With stoppers in the opponent’s suit, the advancer can bid 1NT with 8-10 HCP.

“If the opponent on the advancer’s right makes a bid, the advancer can pass with a weak hand of 0 to 5 points, but should try to compete with a minimum hand of 6 to 8 total points.”

EXERCISE FIVE: Advancing After a Takeout Double with 9 to 11 Total Points

Introduction

“Let’s go back to the advancer’s hand on the table and replace the ♥5 with the ♥K.

♠ K Q 8 6
♥ K Q 7
♦ J 8 4
♣ 10 3 2

“What should we bid with this hand when our partner doubles a 1♦ opening bid and the opponent on our right passes?”

The students will conclude that this hand is close to the strength for game opposite a minimum takeout double. The advancer needs to bid more strongly than with a minimum hand.

“With a hand in the range of 9 to 11 total points, the advancer should jump one level to show partner that the hand has almost enough for game. This is an invitational bid. Opener can pass with a minimum takeout double (13 or 14 total points) and carry on with extra strength. The advancer also can jump to 2NT with stoppers in the opponent’s suit and 11-12 HCP.”

Instructions

“Your left-hand opponent bids 1♥ and your partner doubles. What is your bid with each of the following hands?”

1) ♠ J 10 7 6 3
♥ 9 4 2
♦ A Q 6
♣ K 3

2) ♠ Q 10 3
♥ K J 10 8
♦ A 9 2
♣ J 7 3

3) ♠ A 8 2
♥ 10 9
♦ K Q J 10 8
♣ 8 6 2

Bid 2♠

Bid 2NT

Bid 3♦

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

Conclusion

“When the advancer bids with 9 to 11 total points following partner’s takeout double, the advancer jumps in a four-card or longer major suit if there is one in the hand. Without one, the advancer jumps in a four-card or longer minor suit. The advancer also can jump to 2NT with stoppers in the opponent’s suit with 11 or 12 HCP.”

EXERCISE SIX: Advancing After a Takeout Double with 12 or More Total Points

Introduction

“Put the advancer’s hand back on the table and replace the ♥7 with the ♠J:

♠ K Q J 8 6
♥ K Q
♦ J 8 4
♣ 10 3 2

“Now our hand is worth 13 total points. What would we do when our partner doubles a 1♦ opening bid?”

The students will conclude that the advancer can jump directly to game.

“When the advancer has 12 or more total points, the partnership should have enough combined strength for game. The advancer can jump directly to game in a major suit or to 3NT (13+ HCP) with stoppers in the opponent’s suit. As in responding to an opening bid, the advancer rarely jumps to game in a minor suit, preferring 3NT unless the hand is very unbalanced.

“With 12 or more total points, but uncertain as to the best game contract, the advancer should cuebid the opponent’s suit following partner’s takeout double.”

Instructions

“Your left-hand opponent bids 1♦ and your partner doubles. What’s your bid on each of the following hands?”

1) ♠ 8 6
♥ A K 8 4 2
♦ A 9 3
♣ J 5 4

Bid 4♥

2) ♠ A 6 3
♥ K 4 2
♦ Q J 9 8
♣ A 10 3

Bid 3NT

3) ♠ Q 10 7 6 4 3
♥ 9
♦ J 8
♣ A K J 6

Bid 4♠

4) ♠ A Q 6 4
♥ K J 7 2
♦ A 10 3
♣ 6 5

Bid 2♦*

*Bid 2♦: you are unsure which game contract is best.

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

Conclusion

“When advancing to a takeout double with 12 or more total points, the advancer makes sure that the partnership gets to game.”

EXERCISE SEVEN: Rebids by the Takeout Doubler

Introduction

“As when rebidding after making an opening bid, the takeout doubler puts the hand into one of three categories according to the strength (using dummy points):

Minimum	13 to 15 total points
Medium	16 to 18 total points
Maximum	19 to 21 total points

“If the advancer bids at the cheapest level and you have a minimum hand, what should you do? (Pass.) With a medium hand, you can raise gently to the next level. You don’t expect partner to go further. With a maximum hand, you still don’t have enough to bid game, since partner may have nothing. It’s quite likely that partner has very little, since your opponent also has 13 or more points. You can jump raise, strongly inviting partner to bid game but leaving room for partner to pass with nothing.

“If partner shows 9 to 11 total points by making a jump response, you pass only with a bare minimum of 13 or 14 total points. Otherwise, you carry on to game. If the advancer has cuebid, bid your best suit, preferably a major. If the advancer has jumped to game, showing 12 or more total points, you don’t need to bid on unless you are interested in slam (unlikely when the opponents open the bidding). Let’s see how all of this works.”

Instructions

“Your right-hand opponent bids 1♥ and you double. Your partner bids 1♠. What do you rebid with each of the following hands?”

1) ♠ 9 8 6 2
♥ 3 2
♦ A 10 6
♣ A K J 3

Rebid Pass

2) ♠ K Q J 6
♥ —
♦ K Q 9 4
♣ A J 8 6 2

Rebid 3♠

3) ♠ A 9 6 2
♥ 4
♦ K 8 7 3
♣ A K J 2

Rebid 2♠

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise.

Conclusion

“When rebidding after making a takeout double, you must be very careful if partner shows a minimum hand. Pass with a minimum hand, raise one level with a medium hand and give a jump raise with a maximum hand.”

EXERCISE EIGHT: Making a Plan

Introduction

“When you are declarer, learn to take a few moments at the beginning of each deal to make a plan. Here is an acronym for **PLAN** that will help you remember the four essential steps:

“**P**ause to consider your objective. How many tricks do you need to make the contract?”

“**L**ook at your winners and losers. Find out how many tricks you need to develop.

“**A**nalyze your alternatives. Examine each suit to see how you can develop the tricks you need. Use the techniques we have discussed so far: promotion, developing long suits, taking finesses, ruffing, discarding losers.

“**N**ow put it all together. Choose from among the various alternatives and take care to be in the right hand at the right time, watching your entries.”

Instructions

“Each player take a suit and construct the following hands on the table.

NORTH
 ♠ 10 3
 ♥ A 7 5
 ♦ 9 8 6 5 3
 ♣ 9 5 2
 ■
 SOUTH
 ♠ A Q 5
 ♥ K 8 2
 ♦ A K 4
 ♣ A K 8 6

“Suppose South is playing in a contract of 3NT and West leads the ♥Q. How many sure tricks does South have? (Seven.) What are the possibilities of developing additional tricks in each suit? (One trick in spades if East has the king; two tricks in diamonds if the missing diamonds are 3–2; one trick in clubs if the missing clubs are 3–3.) What would be South’s plan? (Develop the diamonds since there is a possibility of two tricks.) How does this help South determine in which hand to win the first trick? (South should win the first trick with the ♥K, so the ♥A can be used later as an entry to the established diamonds.)”

Follow-up

Discuss the exercise. The students should spot the possibilities for extra tricks in spades (finesse), diamonds (through length if the suit breaks 3–2) and perhaps clubs (through length if the suit breaks 3–3). The best alternative is to try the diamonds, since diamonds will provide both of the tricks needed — fall back on the spades and clubs if the diamonds break badly. Since declarer will need an entry to dummy for the diamond tricks, declarer must win the first heart trick in hand.

Conclusion

“Declarer should always take time to make a plan before playing to the first trick. Determine how many winners you need, how many you have and how you can develop the extra winners you need if you don’t have enough. Then put it all together as a plan, choosing the best alternative and making sure that you will be in the right place at the right time.”

The four pre-dealt deals all involve a takeout double. The auction will appear quite complex to the students the first time they run into this situation in practice. Go over the bidding carefully for each deal to make sure that the students arrive at the appropriate contract. The deals include various play techniques and provide an opportunity for each player to practice making a plan.

SAMPLE DEALS

EXERCISE NINE: The Takout Double

(E-Z Deal Cards: #8, Deal 1)

Dealer: North	♠ 9 7 6		♠ A K 8 3			
	♥ K Q J 10		♥ A 9 5 3			
	♦ A Q 8 7		♦ 10 4			
	♣ Q J		♣ A 7 2			
♠ J 5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ Q 10 4 2	
N						
W E						
S						
♥ 8 6 2		♥ 7 4				
♦ J 9 3		♦ K 6 5 2				
♣ K 9 6 5 3		♣ 10 8 4				

The Bidding

“North is the dealer. What would the opening bid be? (1♦.)

“Would East like to compete in the auction? (Yes.) How can East compete? (By making a takeout double.) Is there any danger? (West may have no points and no suit to bid.) What would South’s response be to North’s opening bid? (Pass.) Is South’s response affected by East’s call? (No.) What is the bidding message given by East’s call? (Forcing.) What would West bid? (2♣.) What would North bid next? (Pass.) What would East bid? (Pass.) Why? (West made a minimum bid, so there is no chance for game.) What would the contract be? (♣2.) Who would be the declarer? (West.)”

The Play

“Which player would make the opening lead? (North.) What would the opening lead be? (♥K, top of a sequence.) How many tricks must declarer take to fulfill the contract? (Eight.) How many sure tricks does declarer have? (Five.) Declarer should look at each suit to decide what possibilities there are for developing tricks. What does declarer plan to do in the diamond suit? (Ruff a losing diamond in the dummy.) What does declarer plan to do in the trump suit? (Draw trumps and hope they divide 3–2.) What should declarer’s plan be? (Ruff the losing diamond before drawing trumps.)

“Pick up your cards and bid and play the deal. Did declarer make the contract? (Declarer should make eight tricks.)”

Introduce the idea of using judgment when deciding on an opening bid. North should open 1♦, not 1NT, with two unguarded suits. East should double and South, with only 5 points, should pass. West should advance the bidding with 2♣, and everyone should pass. Although it’s tempting to bid again, East shouldn’t with a minimum hand. Declarer should plan to ruff a diamond loser in dummy and should be careful not to draw too many trumps before trying to ruff the loser.

