

Over the last few week's we have covered take-out doubles, and in general we have assumed that partner makes a non-jump response. This week we'll look at what you should respond to partner's take-out double.

The minimal response

Hand 1 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 You always assume that partner's double is take-out, if it turns out to be a strong hand type then he'll tell you that next go. So partner is short in ♥'s and is asking you to bid so it's simple – you have 4 ♠'s and so bid that suit. So 1♠. Note that this does not promise any values – partner has forced you to bid and a non-jump shows about 0-9 points.

♠ KJ64
 ♥ J97
 ♦ 764
 ♣ 765

Hand 2 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 And the same is true if you have to respond at the two level. If it's a non-jump then it still shows about 0-9 points, it's simply your cheapest 4+ card suit.

♠ J64
 ♥ J97
 ♦ 764
 ♣ Q765

Hand 3 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 Sometimes you may not even have a 4-card suit that you can bid! With this hand you simply have to respond 1♠. You cannot pass even though you have no points. Remember that a non-jump response promises zero points. You cannot bid 1NT as that shows 6-9 points.

♠ 964
 ♥ Q974
 ♦ 764
 ♣ J76

Hand 4 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 Now this is a bit better. You have a decent 7 points and presumably a 4-4 ♠ fit. But it is still in the 0-9 range, and although it's at the upper end it's still only worth a 1♠ (0-9) response.

♠ KJ64
 ♥ 74
 ♦ K64
 ♣ 9764

More than minimum

Hand 5 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 The best way of looking at it is to assume that partner had opened at the one level promising just 4 cards in your suit. So assuming that partner has about opening values with 4 ♠'s (and ♥ shortage) this hand is worth an effort and a jump to 2♠ is correct.

♠ KJ94
 ♥ A97
 ♦ J6
 ♣ Q654

Hand 6 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 You have the values for game and could simply jump to 4♠. This will normally work out fine but it may just be that partner has only 3 ♠'s. The best bid here is a cue bid of 2♥ and partner will bid 2♠ if he has a 4 card suit and you raise to game

♠ KJ94
 ♥ A97
 ♦ A64
 ♣ J65

Hand 7 This time LHO opens 1♦ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 You have the values for game but simply do not know which major to pick. Partner may well have doubled on 4324 or 3424 shape, i.e. with only one 4 card major. The answer is again to cue bid and raise hoping for partner's major suit reply to game.

♠ KJ94
 ♥ AJ97
 ♦ A6
 ♣ 965

Bidding NT We saw that with Hand 3 you cannot bid NT without values. In fact a NT response is the same as to an opening bid from partner (6-9) with the very important exception that it must contain good stop(s) in the suit opened as you know that partner is probably short in that suit and you will probably get that suit led.

Hand 8 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 You have the ♥'s well stopped and 1NT is the best bid.

♠ J9
 ♥ AQ98
 ♦ 1083
 ♣ 10965

Hand 9 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 You have the ♥'s well stopped and can bid 3NT straight away. Replace the ♦A with the ♦J so it's only a 11 count and an invitational 2NT would be the bid.

♠ J9
 ♥ AQ98
 ♦ A108
 ♣ K865

Very Occasionally you can pass

Hand 10 LHO opens 1♥ and partner doubles, what do you do?
 With solid trumps like this you can pass and thus convert partner's take-out double into penalties. Note that the solidity of the trump suit is all-important. If the ♥'s were ♥KJ864 then that would not be good enough as opener has all the cards to fill in the gaps sitting over you. With a ♥ holding like that you should bid NT at the appropriate level.

♠ J9
 ♥ QJ10986
 ♦ A108
 ♣ K8

Question time. With all of these LHO opens 1♦ and partner doubles, what do you do?

Hand 11	Hand 12	Hand 13	Hand 14	Hand 15	Hand 16
♠ K765	♠ KJ65	♠ KJ76	♠ J87	♠ 86	♠ 87
♥ Q765	♥ 76	♥ KJ76	♥ Q76	♥ 872	♥ 87
♦ 98	♦ K763	♦ 10	♦ AQ10	♦ K754	♦ QJ10964
♣ J76	♣ 9765	♣ AJ97	♣ 9874	♣ J973	♣ AQ8

Answers - 133

- Hand 11: 1♥. You do not have the values to push the level up by bidding 2♦ to give partner the choice of majors.
- Hand 12: 1♠. Give preference to showing a 4 card major rather than the ♦ stop.
- Hand 13: 2♦. This hand is strong enough to force to game, so let partner pick the suit.
- Hand 14: 1NT. 6-9 with a ♦ stop and no 4 card major.
- Hand 15: 2♣. Your cheapest longest suit. You cannot bid 1NT with only 4 points. Even if at the two level, it's still a non-jump and still shows 0-9 points.
- Hand 16: Pass. This type of hand, with long solid trumps, is the only time that you can pass partner's take-out double and thus convert it into penalties.