

## WASHINGTON BRIDGE LEAGUE

We offer our thanks to Washington Bridge league as we, present a copy from their 2014 Jan - Feb bulletin on Double trouble:takeout doubles by columnists > **Ron Zucker** and **Shawn Stringer**. Read original - [Here](#)

### Double trouble:takeout doubles, Part 1

In previous articles, we discussed auctions where your side opened the bidding and you were able to bid constructively to find your best strain and level. When the opponents open the bidding, you must rely on different bidding methods.

You can get into the bidding either by a suit overcall or by using the Takeout Double, and the latter will be the focus of our next several articles.

The Takeout Double is a double made by the overcalling side after the opponent opens the bidding in a suit. The strength of the takeout double in the direct seat is an opening bid or better, but can vary somewhat based on the situation.

The shape of the hand will also vary, but usually the doubler will have no less than 3+ card support for the unbid major and at least honor doubleton in any unbid minor. The doubler is usually, but not always, short in opener's suit. After the opponents open 1♥ a takeout double would be the correct bid with all of the following hands:

- a. ♠ AKxx ♥xx ♦QJxx ♣Qxx
- b. ♠ Qxxx ♥x ♦KQxx ♣KJxx
- c. ♠ KJTx ♥x ♦KJx ♣AJxxx
- d. ♠ AKx ♥xx ♦KQxx ♣Axxx
- e. ♠ AKxx ♥xxx ♦QJxx ♣Ax
- f. ♠ AJT ♥x ♦AQxx ♣Kxxxx
- g. ♠ KQxx ♥xx ♦AJxx ♣Jxx
- h. ♠ Axxx ♥void ♦Kxxxx ♣Kxxx

These hands all have competitive strength plus support for spades, diamonds and clubs.

Most players will not overcall with 1Spade with only four cards, and in hands with a five card minor, bidding that suit may kill any chance to find a better fit elsewhere. The double is the most flexible bid and keeps all bidding options in play. There are four main reasons to make a Takeout Double. The primary purpose of the Takeout Double is to safely contest part scores. When the opponents open the bidding, the overcalling side's chance of a game is diminished. But that does not mean they cannot make a part score, push the opponents to a higher level, or find a profitable save

where the negative result is less than the value of opponent's positive result. It is much easier to get into the bidding at the one level, than it is to wait and try to jump in later. It is also safer to double early, because if it turns out that the opponents have the bulk of the power, they are more likely to outbid than to make a low level penalty double.

Another function of the Takeout Double is to get the competing side to the correct strain. This is particularly important with three suited hands (4441 +/- shapes), since these hands are very hard to describe without using a Takeout Double.

A third purpose of the Takeout Double is for the competing side to find their games. They may well have a major suit game even after the opponents open - a game that depends more on shape than High Card Points (HCP.). The Takeout Double is frequently the best way to start the search for a fit.

The fourth reason to make a Takeout Double is to lay the groundwork for a safe sacrifice.

The Takeout Double, plus subsequent bidding, combine to give the doubler's partner valuable information about the shape of the hands. That may allow him to visualize a cross ruff type hand where, even if doubled, the loss will be less than the value of opponent's game contract.

With hands where you do not have a clear suit overcall but you have opening values, a Takeout Double may be your most descriptive bid. In our next article, we will explore in more detail the strength needed for a Takeout Double and how other factors determine whether the hand is appropriate for this bid.