

# Hand of the Week 9/10/19

By Douglas Doub


## Double Trouble

At least 90% of our doubles in the early rounds of bidding are best played as takeout. The takeout double is the one indispensable convention in the game of bridge. However, there are about six specific auctions when a double should be played as penalty.

A "penalty double" is a double that shows length and strength in the opponent's suit and virtually commands that partner pass. One of the most common occurrences of a penalty double is after a preemptive opening bid. If the next player overcalls and third hand doubles, it is a pure penalty double, commanding that opener pass.

Note that opener has described his hand very well. He has shown a long, strong suit and little or no additional values. His partner has a far better idea of what opener's hand looks like than opener does, and, thus, the responder is in charge of the auction.

Consider board 13 from today:

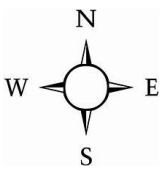
Dir: N	♠ 10		
Vul: Both	♥ K		
	♦ AJ107542		
	♣ 9865		
♠ 84		N	♠ AQ9632
♥ A9753		W  E	♥ Q1082
♦ 8		S	♦ K9
♣ Q10432			♣ 7
	♠ KJ75		
	♥ J64		
	♦ Q63		
	♣ AKJ		

<u>West</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>
	3♦	3♠	Double
Pass	4♦	All pass	

With both vulnerable, North chooses to open 3♦. LHO overcalls 3♠ and partner doubles. Well, opener has a very nice diamond suit, and the 7-4 distribution means extra offense. However, opener must pass. You might consider that your ace of diamonds will be a defensive trick, and the stiff king of hearts is more likely to be of value on defense than on offense. Regardless, you described your hand with your 3♦ bid, and you MUST abide by your partner's decision.

As it turns out, partner has far better diamonds than you would expect and, yet, you still defeat 3♠ one trick for +200 and a fine score. At the table, opener violated captaincy and pulled to 4♦, then misguessed the play for down one and a poor result.

Double Tip #2. This is the North hand for board 22 today:

Dir: E Vul: EW	♠ 8 ♥ Q32 ♦ Q64 ♣ AKQJ85	
♠ A975 ♥ AKJ5 ♦ 75 ♣ 743	N  S	♠ 632 ♥ 1087 ♦ KJ982 ♣ 92
	♠ KQJ104 ♥ 964 ♦ A103 ♣ 106	

You are in fourth seat, and after two passes, RHO (West) opens 1♣. The player who held the North hand was at a loss and chose to double. The rest of the auction consisted of spade bids by partner and club bids by doubler, eventually ending in 5♣, going down.

My tip for this situation is that when you have an unbalanced hand and RHO opens in your longest suit, you should almost invariably pass. If you have at least 19 HCP, you can consider bidding, but should probably still pass. If you get a second chance, you can bid opener's suit naturally, or make a takeout double if you are short in the suit that RHO bids at his second turn. If you are ready for this situation, then you can pass smoothly the next time that it comes up and not give away your hand to the entire table.