

What To Do Over RHO's Takeout Double 12/16/2019

When your partner opens One of a suit and your right-hand opponent (RHO) doubles, you have several options available to you. What you do over the takeout double will depend upon the strength and shape of your hand, and also upon your partnership agreements. In some cases, you can (and should!) make the same bid that you would have made had the double not occurred. However, there are several cases where bidding over the takeout double means something very different than it would have meant if RHO had passed. Here are some of the possibilities:

1. You can pass. If your partner makes a takeout double, then you are obligated to bid. But if your RHO makes a takeout double, you are certainly allowed to pass. And unless you have a very distributional hand, you should pass if you have less than 6 HCP.

2. You can raise partner's suit. Raising partner's suit over the takeout double means the same thing that it would mean without the double: 6 – 9 HCP and support for partner's suit (3+ cards in a major, 4+ in a minor). Furthermore, if partner has opened a minor and you raise the minor, it probably denies a 4-card major.

3. You can jump in partner's suit. Most partnerships play that a jump raise in partner's suit over a takeout double is preemptive, showing at least 4-card support and a weak-ish hand (certainly less than invitational values). This is part of the idea that jump bids in competition are weak.

4. You can bid One No Trump. Most partnerships play that bidding One No Trump over the takeout double shows 8 – 10 HCP – in other words, a bit more than you would need to bid One No Trump had RHO passed. This is because if RHO passes, one feels compelled to bid something with as few as 6 HCP in order to keep the bidding open in case partner has a big hand. And if you can't raise partner's suit or bid a new suit at the one-level, then that bid will be One No Trump. But when RHO doubles, partner is guaranteed to have another opportunity to bid. Therefore, it isn't necessary to bid One No Trump with an ugly 6- or 7-count.

5. You can bid Two No Trump. The standard treatment is to play that jumping to Two No Trump over the double is natural and invitational, so a balanced hand with 11 – 12 HCP. Note that Jacoby Two No Trump is NOT on over interference! If partner has opened a major, then bidding Two No Trump will typically show less than three cards in the major.

However, some partnerships play that the jump to Two No Trump is a conventional bid called Jordan Two No Trump, showing a limit raise or better in opener's suit. So if an opponent jumps to Two No Trump over a takeout double, be sure to ask what it means! (Note: Jordan Two No Trump is alertable.)

6. You can bid a new suit at the one-level. Most partnerships play that bidding a new suit at the one-level shows a 4-card suit or longer and 6+ HCP and is forcing. In other words, it's exactly the same as it would have been without the takeout double.

7. You can bid a new suit at the two-level. The way you play this will depend upon your partnership agreement. Some partnerships play that bidding a new suit at the two-level shows a 4-card suit or longer and 10+ HCP and is forcing. In other words, it has the same meaning that it would have in Standard American without the takeout double. (Note: Two-over-one is OFF over the takeout double!)

However, many partnerships play that bidding a new suit at the two-level is NOT forcing over the takeout double. Instead, it shows a good 6+ card suit and not much else. If partner has opened a major, bidding a new suit at the two-level would deny 3-card support for partner's major.

8. You can make a jump shift. The standard treatment – pretty much universal – is to play that jump shifts in competition are weak. The takeout double is a type of competition. Ergo...

9. You can redouble. The standard treatment is to play that the redouble shows 10+ HCP. It says that this is YOUR hand, and either you and your partner are going to play the hand, or you're going to double your opponents if they get too high.

Some partnerships play that if you redouble, then you are denying a fit in partner's suit. However, depending upon your agreements, this may be your ONLY way to show certain hands that are invitational or better. For example, in order to show a limit raise in partner's suit you may have to start by redoubling (to show 10+) and then raising partner's suit.

Also, you should NOT necessarily redouble whenever you have 10+ HCP. For example, say that partner opens One Club and RHO doubles. If you have 10+ HCP and a 4+ card major, then you should just bid your major (assuming that you play it as forcing) rather than redoubling. Just because RHO has doubled doesn't mean that you should give up on the possibility of finding an 8-card major suit fit!

<p>Be sure to indicate your agreements on responding over takeout doubles on your convention card in the section entitled "Over Opp's T/O Double".</p>
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