

# Responding After a Takeout Double

## Raising Partner

When the opponents are silent and partner opens 1 of a major, and you have the good fortune to have a fit, your first duty is to raise partner as high as you can, immediately.

1♥ pass 2♥ shows a fit and 6-9 points

1♥ pass 3♥ shows a fit and 10-12 points

1♥ pass 4♥ shows a fit and 13+ points

The above is learnt early in any beginning bridge course

### But how should you respond when the bidding starts

1♥ double        ? or

1♥ 1♠            ?

### The simple answer is to bid exactly as you would have done had there been no intervening bid.

This is not the best answer, but it is the easiest to teach. And many social players do exactly that.

However, and as you will soon find out, when both sides are bidding it tends to go in to one of two distinctly different scenarios:

1. **Nobody finds a fit.** Then the auction tends to die quickly
2. **Somebody finds a fit.** Then the auction becomes spirited

There are several reasons for the latter;

- **Emotionally** once you have a fit, it is human nature to not to want to leave go!
- **Pushing** the opponents is good bridge i.e. inducing them to play in a contract that fails
- **Pre-empting.** When the partnership has a 9 card fit it usually pays off, even with hardly any points

A consequence of the above is that when your partner opens, and your RHO intervenes, with a double or an overcall, you find yourself wanting to raise partner for two different reasons.

- a. To show a fit and points sufficient to invite a game call
- b. To show a 9 card fit but little else, i.e. a pre-empt

This means you need two different bids, one for situation a) and another for situation b). But you are not allowed to say Partner this is a type a) bid! Instead you have to have a conventional bid.

From the early days of bridge the above has been common knowledge. And to cope with this situation it has long been recognised that best bidding methods for competitive auctions are different from non-competitive auctions. The good news is that these methods are pretty much standard the world over, i.e. Americans who play 5 card majors, use almost the same methods for competitive auctions as do Acol players.

The bad news is that if you want to do well in a competitive auction, you have some new things to learn. But to try and learn them all at the same time as you are learning the basics, i.e. pre-empts, overcalls, and takeout doubles, would be an excessive load. I have therefore taken a middle road.

In the teaching session on doubles I introduce the traditional ways of raising with a good hand, and raising pre-emptively. I do this so that you know that there is something more for you to learn. And in the hands played I included a couple of hands that demonstrate why pre-empts in competition get good results. They get in the way of the opponents finding their best contract. This is to demonstrate that the full system is worth learning...but later.

There are two reasons for leaving this extra learning till later. Firstly to avoid overload and diluting the learning curve on the basics of competitive bidding. Secondly many of the people that you will find yourself playing with will not know or use the new methods for responding when in a competitive auction. And the first goal early in your bridge playing experience is to get to the stage where you can play with more experienced players.

In summary when the opponents intervene it causes problems for the side that opened. So some new responding bids are required. But from a learning perspective the first challenge is to become adept at causing problems for the side that opened. Learning how to cope comes later!

The bottom line is this: Some of the attached hands show the benefits of pre-emptive fit bids in competition. But for now, just concentrate on the basics of competitive bidding:

- **When to overcall**
- **When to double**
- **How to bid after your partner overcalls or doubles**

1

♠ 7  
♥ AK 10 9 7 4  
♦ A 8 6 2  
♣ K 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 6 5 2  
♥ J 8 5  
♦ 10 9 7  
♣ 4 3 2

♠ Q 9 8 3  
♥ 6 3  
♦ J 5 3  
♣ A J 9 6

♠ A J 10 4  
♥ Q 2  
♦ K Q 4  
♣ Q 10 8 7

Dealer: North  
NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Dou	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

No. 10606

Opening Lead: ♥ A

Illustrates:  
Double

Bidding Commentary

North makes a routine opening bid of 1♥.

East has opening strength, is short in hearts, and has at least 3 cards in all the unbid suits, so doubles for takeout.

South cannot bid. West has the sort of hand that would have responded 2♠ had partner opened 1♠. After a double the correct bid is 2♠. Bidding at the lowest possible level would not promise any points.

Thereafter everyone should pass.

Play Commentary

West can see many possible losers

- ♠ 1
- ♥ 2
- ♦ 1
- ♣ 1

A total of 5. This equates to the number of losing tricks that declarer can afford.

2

<p>♠ 8 6 ♥ J 9 7 4 2 ♦ K J 9 2 ♣ 9 4</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	<p>♠ K 10 7 4 ♥ Q 8 5 ♦ 8 ♣ J 8 6 3 2</p> <p>♠ A 9 5 2 ♥ ♦ Q 7 6 4 ♣ A K 10 7 5</p>	<p>♠ Q J 3 ♥ A K 10 6 3 ♦ A 10 5 3 ♣ Q</p>
N		E							
W		S							

Dealer: East  
EW Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
		1 ♥	Doub
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

No. 11232

Opening Lead: ♣ A

Illustrates:  
Double

Double Followed by a Preemptive Raise

After RHO doubles partner's opening bid West should raise as high as possible, immediately. This will deter North from bidding.

Note: NS can make 4♠.

Normally opener, opposite to a pre-emptive raise, will pass. But here East has a particularly powerful hand, and raises to game.

Declarer needs a successful finesse in diamonds. Due to the double West should have at least 3 of the 5 missing diamonds. Moreover South should have about 13 of the missing 19 HCP. It is therefore much more likely that the ♦Q is held by South

So declarer should finesse South for the missing Q.

3

<p>♠ 9 2 ♥ K Q 9 3 ♦ A J 10 ♣ A 6 4 3</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ Q J 10 6 ♥ 4 ♦ 8 5 4 ♣ 10 9 8 5 2</p> <p>♠ 8 4 ♥ J 8 7 5 2 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ K Q 7</p>	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
		<p>♠ A K 7 5 3 ♥ A 10 6 ♦ Q 9 6 3 ♣ J</p>										

Dealer: South EW Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Dou	3 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

No. 10627

Opening Lead: ♥ K

Illustrates:  
Double

**Pre-emptive Raise After a Double**

South opens with 1♠. West is short in opener's suit and has opening strength. South also has suit lengths where they are happy for partner to choose to play in any of the unbid suits. So West has a good hand for a takeout double.

North has very few points and without intervention from RHO they would pass. But with a 4 card fit, good spades, a pre-emptive jump raise to 3♠ is good tactics. The aim is to risk going down in an effort to deter East from responding to the double. Remember: the weaker your partnership, the stronger is theirs.

Note: ideally you should not make a pre-emptive raise to the 3 level unless you know/believe that your partnership has a 9 card fit. Here, playing Acol, opener has only promised a 4 card suit. However when partner opens 1 of a major about 2 times in 3 they will have a 5 card suit. Moreover when there is a takeout double, which shows shortage in opener's suit, the probability of partner holding 5 or more increases. So raising to the 3 level will be right most of the time. And doing what is right much more often than it is wrong, is good bridge

3♠ is a good contract and should make. If North fails to bid, and passes, East will bid 2♥, which makes.

4

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

  

N	E
W	S

  

♠ K 10 9 7 4
♥ 4
♦ A Q 10 4
♣ K 10 3

Dealer: West			
Neither Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Doub
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

No. 10608

Opening Lead: ♥ J

Illustrates:  
Double

Doubling After Two Suits Have Been Bid

Bidding Commentary

After two suits have been bid South, who is 54 in the unbid suits is ideally situated for a takeout double.

An overcall of 1♠ is an alternative option. However a double offers partner two suits, and also gets over the hand strength. A 1 level overcall could be made on very little.

North, with 11 points and 4 spades must jump to 3♠ so as to encourage partner to bid game, unless they are minimum.

Opening Lead

East has a choice of suits, theirs or partner's. Here the heart suit is very strong and the standard lead is the ♥J, top of an internal sequence

Play Commentary

When planning the play in a suit contract it is usual to start by counting possible losers in declarers hand. But when, as here, dummy has the longest trump suit it is actually better to plan the hand from the point of view of dummy!

After drawing trumps declarer should play diamonds and discard a club from hand on a winning diamond. Played this way the potentially losing club and diamond can be trumped, leading to 4♠+2, i.e. 12 tricks.

5

<p>♠ 10 6 ♥ Q J 9 2 ♦ A 5 4 2 ♣ Q 10 2</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	<p>♠ K 9 3 2 ♥ A K 7 6 5 ♦ Q 8 7 ♣ 6</p> <p>♠ A Q 8 7 ♥ 10 4 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ A K J 9</p> <p>♠ J 5 4 ♥ 8 3 ♦ K 6 3 ♣ 8 7 5 4 3</p>
N		E						
W		S						

Dealer: North  
NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Dou	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

No. 10607

Opening Lead: ♠ 2

Illustrates:  
Double

Double Leads to 3NT

East doubles 1♥ for takeout. After a pass West must bid. They know that partner must have almost all their points outside hearts and expect them to have 4 decent spades. With all the other suits stopped they make the strategic bid of 1NT.

East knows that partner has hearts stopped, and has good intermediates (10s, 9s, 8s) so raises to 3NT

North could lead A♥ but knows that this will help declarer and instead leads 2♠, hoping partner has the Q.

Declarer Play

West can see 24 points and places North, who made an opening bid, with about 13, this leaves only 3 for South.

When North leads the ♠2 declarer can guess that North has the K and South the J, or visa versa. EW have 3 of the honours and if dummy plays lo, South will play their honour. On balance Declarer probably does best to play lo, expecting South to win with the J or K. South should then lead partners suit, hearts. Declarer has QJ109, so plays lo.

Declarer should make 2 spades, 2 hearts, the A of diamonds, and 4 clubs; 9 tricks and contract made.

<b>6</b>	<p>♠ K J 9 7 3          ♥ K 7          ♦ A 8 4          ♣ 9 6 4</p>	<p>Dealer: East          NS Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4 ♠</td> <td>3 ♦</td> <td>Doub</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	4 ♠	3 ♦	Doub	Pass		Pass	Pass
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Pass	4 ♠	3 ♦	Doub											
Pass		Pass	Pass											
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N	E													
W	S													
No. 10626	<p>♠ A Q 10 5          ♥ A 9 6 2          ♦ 7          ♣ K 7 5 3</p>	Opening Lead: ♦ K												

Illustrates:  
 Double  
 Opening Preempt

Bidding Commentary

East has a good pre-emptive suit and is not vulnerable. The hand is worth 6 playing tricks which equates to down 500 if doubled.

However if partner has zero points the opponents have game points and will score over 600. On this basis East bids 3♦.

North however has opening strength and a perfect shape for a double.

North has a five card fit and has a hand slightly short of opening strength and knows that partner has a good hand, so bids game.

Note: When the opponents open a pre-emptive 3, life is always difficult. With a good hand you have to be brave. And sometimes it will all go wrong. That is why pre-empts are made!

Play of The hand

With 3 losers in clubs you cannot afford any more. So declarer must plan to trump 2 diamonds in dummy. This means playing the ♦A and starting to ruff early. If trumps are drawn first it will be too late.

7

<p>♠ Q 10 6 5          ♥ A J 10 8 5          ♦ K 10 7 6          ♣ K 10 7 6</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	<p>♠ 8 4 3          ♥ K J 9 8          ♦ 4 2          ♣ 5 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ K J 9 7 2          ♥ 7 6 5 2          ♦ K 3          ♣ A J</p> <p>♠ A          ♥ A Q 10 4 3          ♦ Q 9 7 6          ♣ Q 9 8</p>
N	E					
W	S					

Dealer: South			
Both Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
Dou	2 ♥	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	?		
Opening Lead: ♥ A			

No. 11233

Illustrates:  
 Double

Double Opposite to an Opening Strength Hand

After RHO opens 1♦, West has an ideal shape for a double. Yes, West has only 10 points, but a void boosts the value of the hand.

North has only 4 points, but does have 4 of partners major with 2 honours in the suit. Unfortunately North does not have a shapely hand. They should raise to 2♥ or 3♥ according to vulnerability.

Regardless of what north bids, South with 7 losers and a 5 card fit should bid game.

Note: West has promised a hand of opening strength. South has KJ9xx in spades and expects no worse than Q x x x from North unless they have compensating strength. Moreover East, with long hearts, can deduce that partner is void in hearts. A slam looks likely.

West is known to be short in hearts, so A♥ is led.

8

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N	E						
W	S						
		<p>♠ 10 5 4 2 ♥ J 7 6 ♦ J 10 4 3 ♣ 7 3</p>					

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Doub	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

No. 10628

Opening Lead: ♥ A

Illustrates:  
Double

#### Bidding Commentary

West opens with 1♥ and North doubles. East has very few points and the worst possible shape, so passes. South is therefore forced to bid and does so at the lowest possible level.

North is very strong and wants to be in game but knows that partner was forced to bid and may have no points. North strongly invites game but South must pass.

#### Declarer Play

Declarer must lose 2 hearts and the ace of diamonds. This means that the losers in clubs must be kept to 1 with the third round of hearts ruffed in dummy.

Alternately play as if dummy is the key hand, planning to ruff 2 clubs in hand. This is best since you want to preserve the trump honours for pulling trumps. This way the little trumps are used for trumping.