

Week 1 — Making a takeout double

A takeout double of a one-level opening shows about 12–17 total points and at least three cards in every unbid suit. (*Cohen, Jan & Feb 2022*)

Rules card

1. Count **total points**: HCP + 1 for a doubleton, 2 for a singleton, 3 for a void (you will be dummy).
2. Every unbid suit needs **three or more cards**. A doubleton in an unbid suit → don't double.
3. With a **five-card major**, overcall instead. With a **1NT opening and their suit stopped**, overcall 1NT.
4. A double of **1NT is never takeout**. A double of a **preempt is takeout**, at any level.

What's your call? (RHO opens 1♥ unless noted)

#	Your hand	Answer	Why
1	♠ K J 7 4 ♥ 6 ♦ A J 8 3 ♣ K 10 5 2	Double	11 HCP + singleton = 13; perfect shape
2	RHO 1♦: ♠ K 2 ♥ Q J 8 7 ♦ A 3 2 ♣ K 5 4 2	Pass	Doubleton spade; no suit to overcall
3	♠ A Q J 8 4 ♥ 7 2 ♦ K 9 4 3 ♣ A 6	1♠	Five-card major comes first
4	RHO 1♣: ♠ J 10 9 8 ♥ Q J 10 7 ♦ A J 10 8 ♣ 3	Double	Isn't 12–17, but look at where honors are
5	♠ K Q 3 ♥ A J 10 ♦ K 8 7 4 ♣ Q 9 2	1NT	16 balanced, hearts stopped
6	RHO 1♦: ♠ K Q 2 ♥ A 2 ♦ K 10 2 ♣ J 7 6 5 4	Pass	Doubleton heart; no suit to overcall
7	RHO 1♦: ♠ J 4 ♥ K Q 8 3 ♦ A 7 2 ♣ K J 6 5	Pass	Only two spades — partner will bid them
8	RHO 1♦: ♠ K ♥ Q 7 6 5 ♦ A 8 7 6 ♣ A 6 5 4	Pass	Singleton spade; partner will bid it
9	RHO 1♣: ♠ Q J 8 ♥ J 5 4 ♦ K J 7 6 ♣ K J 2	Pass	12 HCP, but ugly: wasted in spades
10	RHO 1NT: ♠ K J 9 3 ♥ Q 2 ♦ A 10 8 6 ♣ K 7 3	Pass	No takeout double of 1NT
11	RHO weak 2♠: ♠ 6 ♥ A Q 9 3 ♦ K J 8 4 ♣ A 10 7 2	Double	Takeout; ideal shape

Takeaway: Double promises the other three suits — without them, find another bid or pass.

Additional hands (RHO's opening shown with each hand)

#	Your hand	Answer	Why
12	RHO 1♣: ♠ A 9 7 3 ♥ K 10 5 2 ♦ Q J 8 4 ♣ 6	Double	10 HCP + singleton = 12; ideal shape
13	RHO 1♣: ♠ 5 ♥ K J 8 3 ♦ A Q 9 4 ♣ Q 10 7 2	Double	12 HCP + singleton = 14; perfect shape
14	RHO 1♦: ♠ 9 3 ♥ A Q J 7 3 ♦ 8 4 ♣ K Q 6 2	1♥	Five-card major; only two spades
15	RHO 1♦: ♠ K 9 6 4 ♥ Q 8 5 3 ♦ 7 ♣ J 9 6 2	Pass	6 HCP + singleton = 8; too weak
16	RHO 3♥: ♠ A Q 6 4 ♥ 5 ♦ K J 8 3 ♣ A 9 7 2	Double	Takeout of a preempt; 14 HCP

Week 1 — Full deals (Boards 1–2)

Full deals (★ = the hand the lesson is about)

Board 1 · Dealer North · Vul None

North · 16 HCP	
♠ Q	
♥ A K J 8 4	
♦ K 7 2	
♣ Q J 6 4	
West · 8 HCP	East ★ · 12 HCP
♠ A 9 8 6	♠ K J 7 4
♥ 10 7 5	♥ 6
♦ 10 9 5	♦ A J 8 3
♣ A 9 7	♣ K 10 5 2
Dealer North Vul None	
South · 4 HCP	
♠ 10 5 3 2	
♥ Q 9 3 2	
♦ Q 6 4	
♣ 8 3	

Suggested auction: N 1♥ – E Dbl – S 2♥ – W 2♠ – all pass.

Alternative auction: N 1♥ – E Dbl – S 3♥ – W 3♠ – all pass.

East has only 12 HCP, but the singleton heart makes 14 total points and the shape is perfect. West's 2♠ (8 HCP) is a free bid after South's raise — a preview of Week 4. In the alternative auction, South makes a preemptive jump raise to 3♥ with four trumps and a weak hand, and West still competes to 3♠. Ask: does West think about doubling 3♥?

Board 2 · Dealer East · Vul N–S

North · 6 HCP	
♠ K 10 6 3	
♥ 9 5 3	
♦ Q 10 8	
♣ J 5 2	
West · 5 HCP	East · 15 HCP
♠ 5 2	♠ 9 7
♥ Q 10 4	♥ A K J 8 6
♦ J 6 5 2	♦ A 7
♣ Q 9 7 4	♣ K 10 8 3
Dealer East Vul N–S	
South ★ · 14 HCP	
♠ A Q J 8 4	
♥ 7 2	
♦ K 9 4 3	
♣ A 6	

Suggested auction: E 1♥ – S 1♠ – W 2♥ – N 3♠ – all pass.

South has opening values and all the unbid suits, but a five-card major is the priority: overcall 1♠. If South doubles instead, North bids diamonds and the spade fit is lost. Because South showed five spades, North knows of a nine-card fit and jumps to 3♠. With only 6 HCP this is a preemptive raise (the Law of Total Tricks: nine trumps, compete to the three level). With a real invitation, North would cuebid 3♥ instead.

Week 1 — Full deals (Boards 3–4)

Full deals (★ = the hand the lesson is about)

Board 3 · Dealer South · Vul E–W

		North · 3 HCP		
		♠ 10 8 6 5		
		♥ Q 7 5 4		
		♦ 10 2		
		♣ J 7 5		
West ★ · 15 HCP	Dealer South Vul E–W		East · 9 HCP	
♠ K Q 3		♠ J 9 7 4		
♥ A J 10		♥ K 8 2		
♦ K 8 7 4		♦ J 6		
♣ Q 9 2		♣ A 10 6 3		
		South · 13 HCP		
		♠ A 2		
		♥ 9 6 3		
		♦ A Q 9 5 3		
		♣ K 8 4		

Suggested auction: S 1♦ – W 1NT – N Pass – E 2♣ (Stayman) – P – 2♦ – P – 2NT – all pass.

West has 15 balanced with diamonds stopped: 1NT describes it in one bid. A double would let East jump in clubs or spades, and West could never show the balanced hand. East invites; West, minimum, passes.

Board 4 · Dealer West · Vul Both

		North ★ · 14 HCP		
		♠ 6		
		♥ A Q 9 3		
		♦ K J 8 4		
		♣ A 10 7 2		
West · 7 HCP	Dealer West Vul Both		East · 9 HCP	
♠ K Q J 10 9 5			♠ A 4 2	
♥ 8 7			♥ J 5 2	
♦ 9 7 2			♦ Q 10 6	
♣ J 4			♣ Q 9 6 3	
		South · 10 HCP		
		♠ 8 7 3		
		♥ K 10 6 4		
		♦ A 5 3		
		♣ K 8 5		

Suggested auction: W 2♠ – N Dbl – E Pass – S 4♥ – all pass.

A double of a weak two is takeout: North has 14 HCP and a singleton spade. South, with 10 HCP and four hearts, has enough to bid game directly (Aug 2022: 4♥ here is to play). Make sure the class sees that 3♥ would show roughly 0–8.

Week 1 · NORTH

Board 1 · Dealer North · Vul None

♠ Q ♥ A K J 8 4 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ Q J 6 4

Board 2 · Dealer East · Vul N-S

♠ K 10 6 3 ♥ 9 5 3 ♦ Q 10 8 ♣ J 5 2

Board 3 · Dealer South · Vul E-W

♠ 10 8 6 5 ♥ Q 7 5 4 ♦ 10 2 ♣ J 7 5

Board 4 · Dealer West · Vul Both

♠ 6 ♥ A Q 9 3 ♦ K J 8 4 ♣ A 10 7 2

Week 1 · EAST

Board 1 · Dealer North · Vul None

♠ K J 7 4 ♥ 6 ♦ A J 8 3 ♣ K 10 5 2

Board 2 · Dealer East · Vul N-S

♠ 9 7 ♥ A K J 8 6 ♦ A 7 ♣ K 10 8 3

Board 3 · Dealer South · Vul E-W

♠ J 9 7 4 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ J 6 ♣ A 10 6 3

Board 4 · Dealer West · Vul Both

♠ A 4 2 ♥ J 5 2 ♦ Q 10 6 ♣ Q 9 6 3

Week 1 · SOUTH

Board 1 · Dealer North · Vul None

♠ 10 5 3 2 ♥ Q 9 3 2 ♦ Q 6 4 ♣ 8 3

Board 2 · Dealer East · Vul N-S

♠ A Q J 8 4 ♥ 7 2 ♦ K 9 4 3 ♣ A 6

Board 3 · Dealer South · Vul E-W

♠ A 2 ♥ 9 6 3 ♦ A Q 9 5 3 ♣ K 8 4

Board 4 · Dealer West · Vul Both

♠ 8 7 3 ♥ K 10 6 4 ♦ A 5 3 ♣ K 8 5

Week 1 · WEST

Board 1 · Dealer North · Vul None

♠ A 9 8 6 ♥ 10 7 5 ♦ 10 9 5 ♣ A 9 7

Board 2 · Dealer East · Vul N-S

♠ 5 2 ♥ Q 10 4 ♦ J 6 5 2 ♣ Q 9 7 4

Board 3 · Dealer South · Vul E-W

♠ K Q 3 ♥ A J 10 ♦ K 8 7 4 ♣ Q 9 2

Board 4 · Dealer West · Vul Both

♠ K Q J 10 9 5 ♥ 8 7 ♦ 9 7 2 ♣ J 4