

Bridge Bidding Over Opponents Takeout Double

There are some very standard understandings when the opponents have made a takeout double. This discussion covers the basics of this situation. Player A is the dealer and he/she opens one of a suit. This is followed by a double (for takeout) by Opponent 1. Next to speak is Player B, the partner of Player A.

Notice that Player A and Opponent 1 have at least 26 points between them. This doesn't leave much for Player B and Opponent 2. Player B usually will know which side the hand belongs to.

Principle 1 (P1): Player B should be allowed to direct the initial bidding for A-B.

Principle 2 (P2): Player B should be allowed flexibility for making tactical bids.

P1 and P2 are implemented with the follow understandings:

Understanding 1 (U1): The only strong response by Player B is to redouble. Player A should pass at his/her next opportunity.

Understanding 2 (U2): A one level new suit bids by B indicates a lead and is meant to be disruptive not constructive, i.e. this bid is an indication of weakness not an invitation to bid on.

Understanding 3 (U3): All jump bids by B are preemptive and indicate weakness not strength (remember U1).

Understanding 4 (U4): All raises by B are preemptive and may be very weak (remember U1).

When Player B Redoubles:

Player A opens with one spade. Next to speak (Opponent 1) doubles. Player B redoubles. What should A be thinking?

Here are the WRONG answers to that question:

Oh Boy! Partner has ten or more points I should rebid my spades to let him/her know that I have six.

Oh Boy! Partner has ten or more points I should bid my second suit to let him/her choose between the two.

Here is what A should be thinking:

Partner (B) has some high cards but may have a misfit (even a void in spades!). In which case we should be on the lookout to defend. I better pass Opponent 2's bid around to partner to see if he/she wants to double. (see P1)

Possible Player B hands for this bidding:

B holds:

spades	--
hearts	KQJxx
diamonds	Axxx
clubs	xxxx

Player B redoubles and is trapping with this hand. Opponents 1-2 will be slaughtered in any three level contract. Two hearts doubled (vulnerable) may go for 800 or 1100. With a void in spades, A-B are better off defending. Normally Player A should pass the bidding around to B.

B holds:

spades	Jxxx
hearts	xx
diamonds	KQJx
clubs	Axx

Player B redoubles because he/she has a strong hand. The Opponents 1-2 may bid high in hearts to obstruct A-B's spade game. When Player B later bids four spades, Player A will know that the hand belongs to A-B, i.e. B is NOT sacrificing. Player A should pass on round two since he/she does not know if B is trapping or not (see P2).

The point here is that A should pass because B may have the opponents in trouble. If A bids then the A-B side is the one that may be scrambling to avoid trouble.

Here are some quiz hands:

Hand 1

A opens one club. Opponent 1 doubles. B holds:

spades xx
hearts xx
diamonds xxxx
clubs QJ10xx

What is your prognosis?

Hand 2

A opens one club. Opponent 1 doubles. B holds:

spades QJ10xx
hearts x
diamonds xxxx
clubs xxx

What is your prognosis?

Hand 3

A (not vulnerable) opens one heart. Opponent 1 (vulnerable) doubles. B holds:

spades --
hearts xxxxxx
diamonds xxxx
clubs xxx

What is your prognosis?

Analysis for Hand 1: Opponents 1-2 are likely to have a major suit game. Player A has the high cards for the defense and will want to avoid giving away tricks. Clubs are safe for Player A to lead. **Player B should raise to two clubs.** This has the dual effect of obstructing the opponents search for their major suit game and indicating a safe lead for partner. Notice that Player B only has three points. This is what is meant by P2 and U4.

Analysis for Hand 2: Opponents 1-2 are likely to have a heart game. Player A has the high cards for the defense and will want to avoid giving away tricks. Spades are safe for Player A to lead. **Player B should bid one spade.** This has the dual effect of obstructing the opponents search for their heart game and indicating a safe lead for partner. Notice that Player B only has three points. This is what is meant by P2 and U4.

Analysis for Hand 3: Opponents 1-2 are very likely to have a (vulnerable) spade game. Playing in spades, B's hand will not produce a single trick. In hearts B's hand will produce three or four tricks and several entries to help Player A develop his high card tricks. **Player B should bid at least three hearts.** This has the dual effect of obstructing the opponents and warning partner that B has little or no defense. At match points with a competent A and weak defenders, B can bid four hearts instead of three. Remember U4 and make it difficult for the Opponents!