

Better Bidding with Bergen



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I'll have a double

You prefer to hold four cards in an unbid major for a takeout double, but sometimes you are dealt only three.

West	North	East	South
		1♠	?
♠54 ♥K84 ♦AK75 ♣AJ96			

You should not consider any action other than double. If partner responds 2♥ and plays in a 4-3 fit at the two level, the world will not end.

♠5 ♥AJ9 ♦AQ86 ♣Q7532

If you would pass or overcall, I will agree that you are entitled to your (wrong) opinion. As for myself, I would double and wonder, "What's the problem?"

The flexible takeout double is the standout action.

Tell me more

When the opponents bid and raise a suit and partner has doubled or overcalled, your double is takeout. This may seem obvious and logical but it — a responsive double — is Alertable.

West	North	East	South
1♥	Db1	2♥	?
♠A63 ♥74 ♦Q642 ♣K753			

After partner's takeout double, you want to compete. You certainly won't get rich defending 2♥ but you have no idea what suit to bid. If you guess a minor, you may hit partner's three-card suit instead of a suit with four or even five cards.

The solution is to ask partner to make the decision. Your responsive double asks him to choose a suit and since you didn't bid spades, he will usually bid a minor.

As long as the opponents bid and raise, responsive doubles are on after partner has overcalled.

West	North	East	South
1♠	2♣	2♠	?
♠63 ♥AK54 ♦K8752 ♣86			

Considering that everyone is bidding, you have a pretty good hand. What suit should you bid? Who knows? Once again, the flexible solution is to double.

By the way: How high should responsive doubles be played? When your opponents have voluntarily bid and raised to a high level, you are unlikely to have a trump stack.

Double should still be responsive when the opponents bid game.

Obviously, partner will pass your double when he has nothing to bid.

West	North	East	South
3♠	4♥	4♠	?

South should double with each of these hands:

♠97 ♥K5 ♦AK963 ♣K876

♠A8 ♥5 ♦KQ98 ♣QJ7542

♠642 ♥94 ♦AQ10 ♣AJ963

It doesn't take much

If your right-hand opponent bids after partner's takeout double, you don't need a lot to compete.

Everyone knows that you are off the hook after RHO bids. Therefore, many players overreact and pass unless they have solid values.

Once partner promised a reasonable hand with the unbid suits, all you need is something worth saying.

West	North	East	South
1♣	Db1	1♠	?
♠985 ♥QJ73 ♦A8 ♣8743			

Bid 2♥. Why not show your major? A four-card suit is not a problem.

♠74 ♥J42 ♦KQ106 ♣9632

Bid 2♦. If West becomes declarer, you want a diamond lead.

♠A ♥KJ964 ♣8643 ♣752

Bid 3♥. You owe partner a jump.

Dir: North	♠ Q5
Vul: Both	♥ 104
	♦ KQ1073
	♣ 10642
♠ J432	♠ K10987
♥ KQ98	♥ 762
♦ 4	♦ 82
♣ KQ97	♣ 853
	♠ A6
	♥ AJ53
	♦ AJ965
	♣ AJ

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♦
Dbl	3♦	3♠	3NT
All Pass			

East had only 3 high-card points but his spades were attractive. West, who would probably have led a heart or club, trusted his partner's bid and led the ♠2. After that lead, South had no chance. □

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