

ANSWERS TO MIKE'S BIDDING QUIZ

One of the key principles new players must understand is that sometimes, even with lots of high-card points, doubling or bidding will either mislead partner or put your side in jeopardy. For example, if you make a takeout double without at least three-card support in unbid suits, it often will work out badly, and it's tough on the partnership when you put down a dummy that doesn't resemble what your bidding promised.

There are exceptions, of course, already covered in this series. You may double without adequate support for unbid suits if your hand is strong enough to rebid in notrump (don't count on getting a lot of those).

Once you are a passed hand, the strength requirements for a takeout double are relaxed a bit, as you will see in one of the following quiz hands.

What is your action as South with these hands in the following auction?

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	?

- ♠AQ♥Q762♦KJ4♣KJ63
- ♠Q76♥Q6♦AKJ52♣Q72
- ♠KJ103♥763♦KQJ5♣73
- ♠76♥QJ1073♦AQ8♣AK9

Answers

1. Pass. You do not have takeout double shape, you do not have a suit to bid and you do not have enough high-card points to bid 1NT. A 1NT overcall should show a good 16–18 HCP when bid after two bidding opponents. This hand has a lousy 16 points.

Note: for those of you who use sandwich notrumps or have heard about them, I do not recommend them at all. (A 1NT bid by South

in the given auction would show spades and clubs in a weaker, more distributional hand than if South made a takeout double. This bid is Alertable — Ed.)

2. Pass. Another hand that has incorrect shape for a takeout double. You would be amazed at the number of players who make that call. Some would bid 2♦ and that bid, I am sorry to say, is just about as bad. Yes, you have a good diamond suit, but it is only five cards long, and you have terrible distribution. Also, the side values you have are all unsupported queens.

This hand is not worth 14 points. It is closer to 10. If you realized that this is a pass and not a bid of any sort, you have done well. Just for fun, give this hand to your partners. See how many of them bid something. I will bet you that you find more than one opinion.

3. Pass. This hand is important. You have the suits you need for a takeout double but you are a bit light. However, if you are a passed hand, doubling is okay. This hand is just a reminder that the auction differs a bit when you are a passed hand versus a non-passed hand.

4. 1NT if you wish. Pass if you do not. For sure you should not make a takeout double.

Some good hands are not worth bidding. This is one of them. Save your takeout doubles for proper hands and you will discover an important benefit.

Your partner will learn that he can count on you for support and he will start making more competitive bids. As long as you produce what you promise, your partner will bid more and your side's bidding will look good.

Start making some of the bad doubles I have shown in this series and your partnership will lose some of its confidence along the way. □