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Scores: Kay and Randy Joyce

Problems from Polish Bridge magazine.

1. IMPs. E-W vulnerable.

♠ A K 7 6 4 ♥ K 10 3 ♦ 10 ♣ A 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	2♦	1♠
			?

Call	Votes	Award
Dbl	10	100
Pass	9	90
3♣	0	70
2NT	0	0
3♦	0	0

### Your side has the majority of high-card points

You would like to do something that asks partner to bid. Most experts play that a double in this bidding sequence is takeout. In Standard American bidding, however, double is penalty.

"Pass," says Walker. "I like to play a double to show this hand, but I don't think it's part of Standard American bidding."

Sanborn agrees. "With most of my partners, I would double to show shortness, but I don't believe that applies in Standard American."

"I play double is takeout," says

Robinson, "but that is not standard. Therefore, I have to pass."

"This is a great spot for a modern takeout double," says Boehm "Absent this agreement, I must pass."

Some panelists consider bidding 3♣ but reject that. Your hand lacks the strength or distribution to do so.

"I have good values," says Baze, "but not good enough to act."

"Not strong enough to bid 3♣," says Robinson, "something I would do if I were 5-5."

The other group of panelists doubles for takeout. They feel that without the modern treatment (double being takeout), this hand is impossible to bid.

"Double," says Falk. "Every expert I know recognizes this double must be played as takeout as no other bid is remotely sensible."

"I think just about everyone plays this as takeout," adds Meckstroth.

"Isn't double for takeout pretty standard these days?" ask the Colchamios. "It should be unanimous."

"Double for takeout," agrees Rigal. "These days everyone does this, don't they? If not, maybe they should."

There was one surprise vote. The computer bridge program Bridge Buff doubled. Usually computer software sticks to standard bidding

methods when there is a choice between that and modern ways. (Bridge Buff scored 450 for all five problems, an excellent showing.)

Cohen summed up the case for double being a takeout bid.

"I double," he says. "I don't care if I get zero points if this is not part of 'ACBL Standard.' This, and all low-level doubles should be takeout, something that comes up much more often than penalty. My vote should call attention to this area of bidding."

"Eighty years ago, if your right-hand opponent opened 1♦ and you doubled, it was penalty. Sanity soon prevailed and the meaning of double became takeout. Soon, it will here, too. Think how much more likely this hand type is than having length in right-hand opponent's suit — especially when partner also tends to have some length when he responds 1NT."

If you held the hand shown in the problem, you'd like double to be takeout.

Suppose, however, you held:

♠ A K 8 7 3 ♥ K 10 7 ♦ A 10 9 4 ♣ 5.

With this hand, you'd like to double for penalty.

You and your partner can decide the method you prefer. Which hand do you think would occur more frequently? What do you give up playing it one way or the other?

2. IMPs. N-S vulnerable.

♠ 5 2 ♥ K 8 6 5 2 ♦ K Q J 5 4 3 ♣ —

West	North	East	South
		3♣	?

Call	Votes	Award
3♦	14	100
Pass	4	70
3♥	1	20
Dbl	0	0

### Bidding with distribution

Even though you only have 9 high-card points, the majority of the panel bids. You have a good suit and good distribution. Some are sure it's correct to bid.

"3♦. I need to get involved," says Meckstroth, "so I'm rolling right in with my best suit."