

Another Way to Get Into The Bidding – Take-Out Double

OK, Here you sit holding this lovely hand ♠AJ74 ♥KQ83 ♦5 ♣KJ96 already to open the bidding with 1♣. However, before you get a chance your RHO, the Dealer, opens the bidding with 1♦. You can't OverCall (No 5-Card suit) what can you do? **You Double!** You lay down the Red Card with the big X on it! At one time the Double was used only in penalty situations; but eventually it was seen that low-level Doubles could be safely used to convey other information – Doubles of low-level contract proposals are unlikely to be a try for a penalty score, so partner should not interpret it as a penalty double.

This call of a Double following an Opening bid is called a Take-Out Double or TOD; it says to Partner "*I also have opening points and can support any unbid suit*". Here it is obvious that no matter the suit your partner chooses you'd be equally happy. But what if you held: ♠AJ74 ♥KQJ3 ♦K5 ♣965? You'd love it if Partner bit ♠'s or ♥'s! Those ♣'s – Yuk! So in order to execute a TOD you must have the proper shape and suit strength.

This bid is called a Take-Out Double because it requires the Doubler's Partner to Bid, if the intervening LHO doesn't. Either bid effectively Takes the Double Out of consideration. In the old days Doubles were penalty oriented – daring the opponent to make their Bid. Modern Bidding schemes use various low level Doubles to provide information like this one: *I have opening points and can support any unbid suit*. So after either the opening Bid or even a sequence like: 1♣ – P – 1♥ – X the TOD says:

- a) I have Opening points! ... and
- b) I am short in opponents suit (3 in the Direct seat, often only 2 in the 4th seat)!
- c) I can support any unbid suit!

... and

Requirement (c) usually means at least 3 with an Honor, even Jxx will do. This is what we mean when we say suit strength.

And the first (a) requirement can be relaxed a bit, to 10-11 HCP if you have already passed. Since you passed Partner should realize that you can't comply fully with (a) for example : you are holding ♠KJ74 ♥K5 ♦KJ93 ♣965? You start with a Pass and the bidding goes: P – 1♣ – P – 1♥; X[you]. You have a legitimate TOD promising support for ♠'s and ♦'s even though you only have 11HCP.

How to Answer your Partners TOD

Let's take an example: You hold: ♠J743 ♥65 ♦9753 ♣765 and the bidding goes 1♥ – X – P – ? the X is a TOD

It is your Bid and Partner has exercised a TOD. What is your Bid? **YOU CAN NOT PASS!!!!**

- You must Bid!
 - You must Bid without grimacing!
 - You must Bid even with 0 HCP!
 - You must Bid with 3-3-4-3 with your 4-Card suit the Opponents suit
 - You must Bid!
- You must Bid Something!
You must Bid without sighing!

Did I mention: **YOU MUST BID!** With the above hand Bid 1♠ without a grimace or a falter!!! (Don't give your hand away). Why? You ask: "With such a bad hand, why do I need to Bid?" Because, if you don't the opponents will end up in a Doubled 1♦ contract. Remember a Doubled contract promises that the contract will be set, you certainly cannot set this particular contract with your hand, and Partner has already announced a shortness in ♦'s, the doubled contract is almost assured and the opponents will get an elevated score.

If you do not Take-Out the Double it converts to a penalty contract which will likely give the opponents a good score. So in the above, trust Partner and, confidently Bid 1♠.

What if you have a Good Hand when Partner Doubles?

With <10 HCP generally Bid you best (longest and Strongest) suit at the cheapest possible level. If your best suit has been Bid by opponents Don't Bid it! We will give options later. In the last bidding sequence, if you held ♠KJ74 ♥65 ♦K753 ♣K95 (10HCP) you would bid 2♠ (instead of the weak 1♠) showing your High Card point count. With 10+ HCP Bid your best suit 1-level higher than necessary. Your jump lets partner know you have 10+ HCP. Your partner has advertised an opening (or better) hand so your side (with 22+ HCP) may even have Game potential – don't worry about the jump.

Can you ever Pass Partner's TOD?

Yes, if your RHO Bids, he has taken the Double Out for you and you are off the hook. But if you have a decent suit it is recommended that you Bid it. It is a 'free bid' meaning you didn't have to bid but you did and it shows you have 10+ HCP.

Can I ever Bid NT in answering Partners TOD

Anytime the opponents have Bid a suit and you Bid NT you are showing a stopper in their suit(s). Bidding NoTrump promises no 4-Card suit and stopper(s) in opponents bid suit(s).

- a) 8-10 PP + 1 stopper ... Bid cheapest level of NT
- b) 11-12 PP + 1 and ½ stoppers... Jump in NT
- c) 13+ PP + 2 stoppers ... Bid 3NT

Guidelines for Rebids by TOD

Let's assume that Partner has advanced 1♠ to your TOD: 1♠ – X – P – 1♠; P – ?

- a) With Minimum Opening hand: Pass! Remember, Partner was required to bid and may have 0 HCP.
- b) With Medium Opening hand and 4♠'s – Bid 2♠ showing support and allow Partner a bid to show his point count.
- c) With Big Opening hand (18–20 HCP) and 4♠'s – Bid 3♠ Partner should take it to Game with anything at all
- d) With 22+ HCP and 4♠'s – Bid 4♠

Really, Can I ever Pass my Partners TOD

Let's say Opponent Bids 1♣ and Partner Doubles. RHO Passes dumping the 1♣ Doubled contract in your lap. You Hold ♠K7 ♥A5 ♦975 ♣QJT753.

You might Pass. Likelihood is that you have more Trump (it's called a Trump stack) than the opponents so Partner should be leading a Trump helping to strip the trump from their hands.

However in most case, If you want to dissolve a Partnership immediately after the Game ends; you can Pass to that outcome.

Do you always have to have 13+ HCP to exercise a TOD? Some suggest that shape might be taken into consideration. Mel Colchamiro calls the guidelines as to when to TOD, the MATCH GAME. Since we expect Partner to answer with a 5-card suit we should always have at least 3-cards in all the unbid suits, but we use how many cards we have in the bid suit(s) to determine how many HCP. You'll see why he calls it the Match Game.

0-Cards in the bid suit 10+ HCP

1-Card in the bid suit 11+ HCP

2-Card in the bid suit 12+ HCP

3-Card in the bid suit 13+ HCP Yes, we don't always have to have 2 or less in the opponents suit, we could be 3-3-3-4 and still have 3 in the unbid suits to take a drive down the TOD road.

Remember: The TOD is exercised by an opponent of the Opening bidder – it is an Overcall