

Redouble Them

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Takeout doubles can be dangerous. Consider this typical layout.

AQTxx Txx Qx KJx

KJxxx xxx Jxx xx

x Axxx ATxx Axxx

xx KQx Kxxx Qxxx

North opens 1 spade and, at any vulnerability, east doubles. South has a typical 10- count with 2 spades . E-W have two 4-3 fits and will play 2 diamonds maybe, down 5, or 2 hearts down 4. 1100 vul or 800 not vul. No one did anything wrong. This is the risk of a takeout double. Unlike an overcall, the double is based on distribution and not tricks . A good 5- card overcall has 4 tricks already. But sometimes distributions work against you. You must redouble with 10 points to pave the way for a penalty. Why? Because it is “free”. A profitable option to be considered by both north and south before making another bid. At favourable vul, you only need to beat them 2 to outscore your game of 400. Thus, you have 25 total points and they have 15. how will they get 7 tricks for down one? If you have 23 combined points, then down one for 200 is enough. Now they need 8 tricks with their combined 17 and meager fit.

If you are red and they are white, it is more problematic because your game scores 600 and you need down 4 to compensate. So penalty doubles are not a prime option.

How to do it? After a redouble which shows 10+ points, an opponent will bid a suit. A pass next by N or S indicates a willingness to sit for a penalty double: a balanced hand or a semi-balanced hand with 3 of their suit maybe. If the other person has 3 of that suit, she should double . An immediate double of their suit indicates 4+ or a stronger hand with a misfit for partner (void or stiff) and 3 of their suit. If red vs white, a penalty double should have 4+ of their suit .

Follow ups: after a redouble, NS cannot pass out an opposing runout. So if North has opened with 18 points and west next bids 2 clubs, North may have 5-3-3-2 shape and can pass, secure that his partner has to either double this or bid something. And if south has made a 13 point redouble and East runs to a suit he has xx in. he also may pass. Partner is obliged to do something. Also a bid like 1H (X) XX (P) 2C or 1H (X) XX (P) 2H shows an unbalanced hand, long suit, uninterested in the prime option which is a penalty.

Other implications are that new suits ...1S (dbl) 2C are not forcing: no redouble! That 1y (dbl) XX shows 3 or fewer of partner's suit. With 4-card support or 5 in a minor, don't bother to redouble. Your fit is too good to make a penalty an appealing option. Bid 2NT . A lighter “Jacoby 2NT” which shows at least a limit raise. Of course, jump raises are now weak and also show big fits.

The key is that vulnerability is a big factor in your bid after a redouble. If they are r-w then strain to double them. If they are w-r then only double them if they bid your 4+ suit.

Please turn to next page for questions.....

Try these :

1. assume w-w and partner opens 1 heart (X) ?

a) Axxxx xx Kxx Jxx b) xx Axxx Kxx QJx c) Axx xx KJx QJxxx

2. now consider

1H (X) xx (P)

P (1S) ?

d) Kxx x Axxxx QJxx e) Kxx x AQxxx AJxx

f) Kxxx xx KJxxx Ax g) Kxx xx AJTxxx Qx h) Kxx Axx xx Kxxxx

If you answer these and wish to have your answers checked,
email Dave Colbert at davecolb@rogers.com