



## Coping With Overcalls and Takeout Doubles

When our side has opened the bidding and opponents intervene the principles of competitive bidding can still apply: you may agree with your partner that *simple raises* are **pre-emptive**, and *sound raises* are shown by the **Unassuming Cue-bid**.

West North East  
1♥ 1♠ ?

♠94  
♥K542  
♦Q542  
♣J83

♠3  
♥K1092  
♦A9532  
♣963

♠A92  
♥QJ75  
♦AQ86  
♣92

2♥. A balanced raise. Occasionally we may have to raise with 3-card support when nothing else appeals.

3♥. A distributional raise with 4-card support but little defence.

2♠. The cue-bid shows a sound limit raise to **at least 3♥**. Here East will bid game even if partner signs off in 3♥.

### 2NT as a Replacement for the Cue-bid over a Takeout Double

When an opponent makes a takeout double he shows all the unbid suits at once, but since he has not actually bid one you have no cuebid that you can use to show strength.

Many years ago someone realised that you would rarely want to use 2NT in its natural sense over a takeout double and came up with the idea of using that bid to show a strong raise.

So eg 1♥-Dbl-2NT means that you have **at least four hearts and a sound invitational raise to game**.

### The Penalty Redouble

If 2NT is not available in its natural meaning what can we do with a hand with game invitational values but no support for partner's suit? We use the **redouble** (XX).

Eg 1♥-Dbl-Redbl means that you have 10+ points, but no support for partner.

It strongly suggests that the hand may be a misfit, in which case it will be better if opponents play it, preferably doubled. The redouble indicates that your side has the balance of the high cards but no obvious fit.

### Further Bidding after the Redouble

West North East South  
1♥ Dbl Redbl 1♠  
Dbl

West has a sound opening bid with 4 spades. He doubles 2♠ for penalties. If North removes to another suit double from either partner is also penalty. If no-one can double for penalties someone must bid again

West North East South  
1♥ Dbl Redbl 1♠  
Pass Pass Dbl

West cannot double 1♠ but has a hand good enough to defend if partner can double. His Pass is **forcing**. East must make at least one more call. If he cannot double he must bid something.

West North East South  
1♥ Dbl Redbl Pass  
2♥ Pass ?

This time West has opened light with distributional values. Bidding immediately, without giving partner the chance to double, means the auction is no longer forcing: if East really hates hearts he can pass.



## Coping With Overcalls and Takeout Doubles

So the **Redouble** over a takeout double makes the auction *forcing to 2NT*.

This means you cannot allow opponents to play at the 2-level unless they are doubled.

The exception is when the opening bidder rebids his own suit, or bids a second suit, at his first opportunity, without giving partner a chance to double what they have bid. That shows an opening bid based on distribution rather than high cards, and the redoubler may pass without support.

With a distributional opening that also has high cards opener should make a *forcing pass* first time, then remove partner's penalty double.

### Action by the Advancer

("Advancer" is the partner of the player who has made an overcall or takeout double!)

When the auction starts 1♣-Dbl-redbl- everybody else has a good hand, and advancer is usually weak.

The aim is to look for a relatively safe spot – a contract that does not allow opponents to take a large penalty.

1♣-Dbl-redbl-**Pass** **does NOT mean that you are happy to defend 1♣ redoubled.**

It means that you have nothing helpful to bid. You would bid a suit if that was the only place you could possibly play. And a pass means you do not have four cards in the cheapest available suit.

Eg 1♥-Dbl-Redbl-Pass means that you do not have four spades.