

83. Penalty Double After A Takeout Double

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♠ 765
 ♥ 6432
 ♦ KQ2
 ♣ J109

♠ Q83
 ♥ KQ109
 ♦ 53
 ♣ KQ82

♠ 92
 ♥ 8
 ♦ AJ10984
 ♣ A765

♠ AKJ104
 ♥ AJ75
 ♦ 76
 ♣ 43

W N E S
 P 1♠
 Dbl 2♠ 3♦ 3♠
 Dbl All Pass

--East West Vulnerable--

Penalty Doubles

Takeout doubles are usually doubles at the one or two-level, higher if opponents pre-empt, while the following doubles are for penalty:

1. Doubles made by doubling over and not doubling under;
2. A double made by your partner when you have already told him your hand (1NT or a pre-empt does this);
3. A double after one's partner has already answered (by a bid not a pass) a takeout double;
4. A double made when the partnership knows they have the balance of power;
5. A double made after the partnership has agreed on a suit;
6. Any takeout double may be passed not for lack of a better bid but for penalty (conversion).

7. Any double made after a takeout double has been converted to penalty (passed); and
8. any double after the partnership makes a redouble.

This week's column is an example of 3 and 4.

The bidding:

East passes in first seat. East may contemplate a weak two diamonds, but this is not recommended with two aces and a 6-4 distribution. A weak two bid should not re-evaluate into a good hand once partner bids given the chance.

The contract: Three spades doubled by South

The opening lead: The king of clubs

A diamond is not the correct lead because West does not want to ruff holding the queen of trump third. Perhaps after the queen of trump has won a finesse, a diamond switch would be good.

The play:

East signals with the seven of clubs on partner's king. This is the highest club other than the ace that West cannot see. West plays a small club to partner's ace. East now plays the eight of hearts.

West has four exit cards (the third club, two diamonds and the king of clubs) so he will win three hearts and the queen of spades and be able to exit safely. He should wait for hearts to come to him. Defense will also get a diamond and two clubs for a total of seven tricks. Trying to give partner a heart ruff is an unnecessary risk. Hearts will come to West regardless. East will only be ruffing South's losing hearts not his ace.

The result: Three spades doubled down three for -500.

Notes:

- Nine opposite 12 points is not enough for game so 500 for East and West is a very good score.
- Doubles work when the cards are placed badly for the declarer.