

88. Penalty Conversion

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	♠ 8 ♥ 732 ♦ A9865 ♣ 10654														
♠ 76 ♥ AQ108 ♦ QJ2 ♣ AK32			♠ KQ109 ♥ 654 ♦ K43 ♣ 987												
	♠ AJ5432 ♥ KJ9 ♦ 107 ♣ QJ														
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1NT	P	P	2♠												
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 6.

The bidding:

West, with a balanced 16 points, opens one notrump. East has a four triple three distribution and eight points. Since partner will accept an invite with 16 points, it is best to pass. With one more point, East would invite with two notrump. There is no ruffing value and this is one case that is acceptable not to use Stayman with a four card major.

South with two passes to him, decides to bid. It is a good idea to balance over one notrump with two distributional points and any strength. Partner is marked for some strength behind the one notrump opener.

West doubles for takeout. He has four hearts and cannot be doubling for penalty when he has no idea what his partner has. East is quite happy to convert the takeout double to penalty and passes.

The contract: Two spades by South, doubled

The opening lead: The ace of clubs

Leading ace from the ace and king is usually a good lead. Here West can switch to diamond when he determines that clubs may be setting up for declarer.

The play:

Dummy wins the ace of diamonds and declarer leads a small trump. East splits his honours by playing the queen of spades. Now declarer won't get to dummy again.

Declarer will lose three spades, three hearts, one diamond and two clubs.

The result: Two spades doubled down four for -800.

Note: The cards are positioned badly for South. He finds out too late.