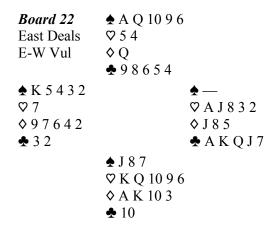
01/17/12 Bid Their Suits!



NS 3♠; NS 2N; NS 2♡

West	North East		South
Ronni	e Pete	Joe	Diane
		1 ♡	Pass
1 🛊	Pass	2 🍁	2 ♡
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
Pass	2 🛊	All pas	SS

Many would pass the opening bid as West, but the 1♠ response is reasonable enough. East was not strong enough to force to game, so rebid a wide-ranging 2♠. All normal enough so far.

South then bids her best suit, which happens to be East's suit. When East's double came back to me, I decided I might do better declaring $2\spadesuit$, West's suit, than my novice partner would do in $2\heartsuit$. True - I made $4\spadesuit$!

At South's second call, what is the standard meaning of a double? ... And what would you do in that seat?

- 1. takeout of clubs
- 2. takeout of clubs and spades
- 3. penalty of hearts
- 4. other

Paul Perkowski: There's no such thing as a takeout double in standard when the opponents have bid 3 suits naturally. Therefore, it's penalty oriented – presumably with both strong clubs and hearts (the suits you're sitting over). So, what type of hand could it be (that didn't have a 1NT or 2C overcall at the 1st op)? I guess a strong 1-4-4-4 might fit the bill, expecting partner to have long ♠. But it would be rare. With the actual hand, I'd pass. Eric Schwartz: (3) is reasonable — I don't know whether it is standard. At any rate, the double clearly shows hearts, because South couldn't act at her first turn and is now coming into a very live auction. On the other hand, I think it is dangerous to make a purely penalty double of hearts. I think South should have the unbid suit — diamonds, as well. Guess what? That's exactly what she had. And that's what I would have done. North's pull to 2♠ is not unreasonable, with such a strong suit lying over the spade bidder. I might have called 2♠ immediately [over 2♥], without waiting for 2♥ to get doubled (it shouldn't have been). South can now call 3♠, and North might raise to four.

Steve Willner: There probably is no standard, but I'd treat it as (2), which implies (3) as well. The difference is that (2) players can't double without diamonds, but (3) players can.

Paul Wendt: In the family under discussion, all doubles imply length in opener's first suit, which should be five cards if the hand is otherwise appropriate for a notrump overcall. (Don't pass hopefully with a notrump overcall because it includes a four-card trump stack.) It must be worth partnership discussion which hands with a side singleton may overcall notrump or double and rebid notrump. [Contrary to (2),] the second-round, second-hand double will often include spades (responder's suit) and takeout to 2S must be one common reply, natural.

Gary Schwartz: I don't know what the "standard" meaning, if there is one, would be either. However, I don't think (2) or (3) make a whole lot of sense, because after announcing a single-suited hand with a known bad split (3) or a two-suited hand with one known bad split (2), partner is too often going to have nowhere to go to avoid a big number. So what I think it ought to be is (1), takeout of clubs. That is, treat it as similar to 1♥-P-1NT-P; 2♣-X, which is certainly takeout of clubs.

What I would do in the South seat is pass and hope to have an opportunity to lead a trump. What I wouldn't do with the North hand is pull $2\heartsuit$ doubled. The North hand will make a vastly better dummy than South could ever imagine when she bid $2\heartsuit$.

As for responding 14, that is the modern style, and from my observations, the modern style has merit. I have seen far more bad results than good from passing this sort of hand.

Pete Matthews: 2♥ might have been a 7-bagger – I channeled the Hideous Hog and got a good story.

We agree that South's double would promise hearts, but on little else. Paul P. makes a good case for penalty – primary hearts and secondary clubs would be my related description. Gary argues takeout of clubs – the winning call this time, as East has seven certain tricks. For Eric & Steve, double shows \heartsuit & \diamondsuit (2).

In standard bidding, $1\heartsuit$ -P-1NT-P; $2\heartsuit$ -X is penalty. Would you be able to pull the trigger with this South hand? You may never get a better shot, but I like passing (West may escape into a club bust, for example). How about $1\heartsuit$ -P-1 \spadesuit -P; $2\heartsuit$ -X? I would prefer a sometimes non-standard agreement to play takeout in all these cases, when partner has not bid. If you get that 1 in 1,000 penalty double, just pass and take your plus score. There's definitely material here for partnership discussion.