THE TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

Double as an overcall is a hand with:

- opening values
- tolerance for all three unbid suits (at least three cards in each)
- shortness in the suit doubled (preferably, no more than two).

  OR
- a hand of any shape with 16+ HCP

Sometimes a Take-Out Double can be made on less than 12 HCP and can be made with 9+ HCP but requires 4 cards in all unbid suits (if only 1 suit bid by opponents) or 5-4 in unbid suits (if 2 suits already bid by opponents)

Also, in the 'protective position', when openers partner has passed, the Take-Out Double can be made with fewer HCPs. Here it is the same as a suit overcall where you can borrow a King on the grounds that your partner probably has some values.

Take-Out Double is a request for partner to bid his best of the unbid suits.

4-4-4-1 shape is a promising Take-Out Double because the chances of finding an 8-card trump fit are excellent (in excess of 80%)

5-4-4-0 shape is also promising although if the 5 is a major suit then a straight overcall may be more appropriate.

 5-4-3-1 shape (13% of all hands) is also promising, especially where there is quality in the 3-card suit.

5-4-3-1 or 5-4-2-2 shapes are promising for a Take-Out Double when opponents have bid two suits and the Doubler is 5-4 in the other two.

Responding

Partner of the doubler must bid his best suit. He may pass if:

- his right hand opponent intervenes, or
- on the rare occasions when his hand is such that he wishes to convert the takeout double to a penalty double

Doubler's rebid

Doubler will normally Pass unless he has 16+ HCPs.

With stronger hands a common treatment is to double first, regardless of distribution, and then make your bid even when it differs from partner's bid:

- 16+ HCP and a good 6 card suit - convert partner's bid to this suit
- 18+ HCP and a good 5 card suit - convert partner's bid to this suit
- 19+ HCP balanced with a stop can convert partner's bid to notrump

    Note: 16-18 HCP balanced hands with a stop usually make a
        notrump overcall instead of Double