Takeout Doubles

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

	♠ J 7 6 ♥ A K 7 6 4 ♦ 10 9 4 ♣ A Q	
♠ 10 9 4 3 2 ♥ Q J 10 ♦ A 8 7 ♣ K 9	N W E S	♠ A K Q 5 ♥ 3 2 ♦ K Q 5 ♣ J 7 4 3
14 10 15 1	♠ 8 ♥ 9 8 5 ♦ J 6 3 2 ♣ 10 8 6 5 2	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 ♥	Dbl	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

4 ♠ by West
Lead: ♥ A

East should make a takeout double, as a spade overcall would promise a five-card suit. West can bid 3 ♠ showing 10-12 points and a five card suit. With 15 points and a doubleton, East has enough to bid game.

North leads the ♥ A followed by the ♥ K. It is important that North does not next attempt to cash the ♣ A as there is no threatening long suit in dummy for declarer to discard losers. If North defends passively by exiting a diamond or a trump at trick three, the defence will come to two club tricks, defeating the contract.

The play theme: Deciding between an active or passive defence

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Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ A J 8 7 5 ♥ J 6 3 ♦ 8 4 ♣ J 6 5	
♠ 9 3 ♥ Q 7 5 ♦ 10 6 5 2 ♣ K Q 8 4	N W E S	♠ K 6 ♥ A K 8 4 2 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ A 10 3
7 7 14 12	♠ Q 10 4 2 ♥ 10 9 ♦ A K Q J ♣ 9 7 2	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 ♥	Dbl
2 ♥	2 ♠	All pass	

2 ♠ by North
Lead: ♥ A

Over East's 1 ♥ opener, South can make a takeout double showing opening points, heart shortage, four cards in the other major, and at least three cards in the other suits. West raises to 2 ♥, over which North bids 2 ♠, which ends the auction. Note, North is not forced to bid and with less than six points would pass.

East cashes the ♥ A, and on receiving partner's encouraging signal of the ♥ 7, continues to cash the ♥ K. East knows the 3rd round of hearts will be ruffed and the strong diamonds in dummy look threatening; hence a switch to clubs at trick 3 is critical, else declarer can discard club losers. The contract goes down with an active defence.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ 10 5 ♥ K J 9 3 2 ♦ 10 6 3 ♣ 9 8 7	
♠ K Q 6 2 ♥ 10 8 4 ♦ A K Q J 2 ♣ 10	N W E S	♠ A J 7 4 3 ♥ 7 6 5 ♦ 8 5 ♣ Q J 6
4 **15 8** **13**	♠ 9 8 ♥ A Q ♦ 9 7 4 ♣ A K 5 4 3 2	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 ♣
Dbl	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All pass		

4 ♠ by East
Lead: ♣ A

Holding 4-3 in the majors, West should make a take-out double rather than overcall 1 ♦. With a five card spade suit and a doubleton, East should jump to 2 ♠ showing 8-10 points. West, with a singleton and good diamonds, should bid game.

After leading the ♣ A, South sees the threatening diamond suit in dummy and should switch to the ♥ A. North plays the ♥ 9, an encouraging signal, and when South continues with the ♥ Q, North should overtake this and continue with a third round of hearts. This active defence beats the contract.

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Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

	♠ Q 4 3 ♥ A K 10 9 ♦ 3 ♣ A K Q 10 2	
♠ A J 10 ♥ J 8 ♦ A K J 9 2 ♣ 7 6 3	N W E S	♠ K 9 6 2 ♥ 7 3 2 ♦ 10 5 4 ♣ 9 8 5
18 **14 3** **5**	♠ 8 7 5 ♥ Q 6 5 4 ♦ Q 8 7 6 ♣ J 4	

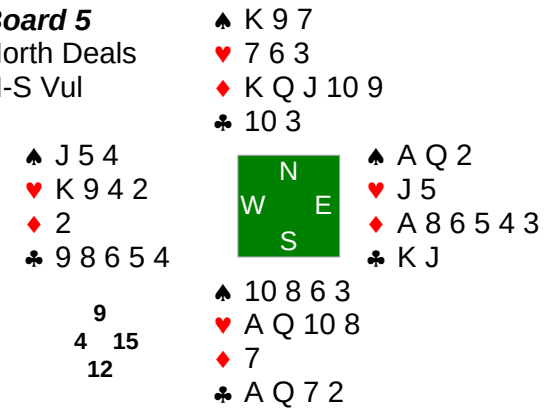
West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1 ♦	Dbl	Pass	1 ♥
2 ♦	4 ♥	All pass	

4 ♥ by South
Lead: ♦ A

West opens 1 ♦. North should make a takeout double rather than overcall 2 ♣. South must respond 1 ♥ (prefer major over minor). With such a strong hand, North bids straight to game.

After cashing the ♦ A, West spots the threat of the strong club suit and notes that the only hope of defeating the contract is if partner has the ♠ K, which will enable the defence to take their spade tricks before these are discarded on the clubs. West switches to the ♠ A at trick 2, East playing the ♠ 9 (encouraging) and West continues with ♠ J, pinning dummy's ♠ Q. This active defence beats the contract.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	1 ♦	Dbl
All pass			

1 ♦× by East
Lead: ♦ 7

East opens their longest suit and South makes a takeout double. With such good diamonds, North makes the rare call of passing a takeout double at the one level, converting it to penalties.

South leads their singleton trump and the defenders can make 8 tricks (four trumps, two clubs, one heart and one spade). With effective defence, the contract will fall two tricks short.

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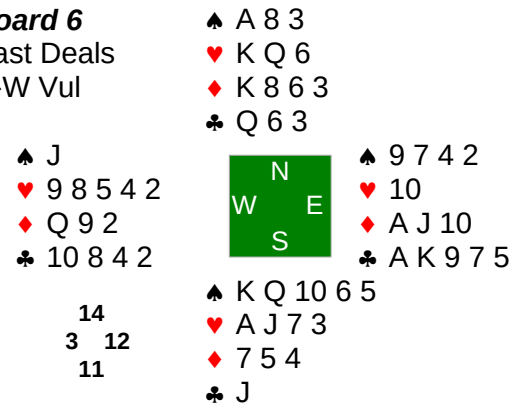
Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 ♣	1 ♠
2 ♣	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by South
Lead: ♣ 8

Holding a five-card major (and only 11 points), South should prefer a suit overcall to a take-out double. West has four card support and can add three points for the singleton to stretch to a 2 ♣ bid. North, aware of the eight-card fit, jumps to three spades to show a good raise and South raises this to game.

West leads the ♣ 8 (second highest from a suit without an honour), and the ♣ J drops under East's ♣ K. East should defend passively, as dummy lacks a threatening long suit. At trick two, East should switch to a heart or a trump, and wait to take three diamond tricks.