**Board 22**

- **East Deals**: ♠ A Q 10 9 6
- **E-W Vul**: ♦ 5 4
- **♠ K 5 4 3 2**
- **♦ 9 8 6 5 4**
- **♥ 7**
- **♥ 9 7 6 4 2**
- **♣ 3 2**
- **♣ J 8 7**
- **♥ Q 10 9 6**
- **♥ A K Q J 7**
- **♠ J 8 7**
- **♥ Q 10 9 6**
- **♥ A K 10 3**
- **♣ ♦ 10**

**NS 3♣; NS 2N; NS 2♥**

**West** | **North** | **East** | **South**
---|---|---|---
Ronnie | Pete | Joe | Diane
1 ♠ Pass | 1 ♠ Pass | Pass | 2 ♠ Pass
Pass | Pass | Pass | 2 ♠ All Pass

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♠, West's suit, than my novice partner would do in 2♥. True - I made 4♠!

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♥ doubled. The North hand will make a vastly better dummy than South could ever imagine when she bid 2♥.

As for responding 1♠, 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 ♦ & ♦ (2).

In standard bidding, 1♥-P-1NT-P; 2♥-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♥-P-1♣-P; 2♦-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.