

Minimum Offshape Takeout Double (Savannah Double) – After an opening bid, a direct seat double is for takeout normally showing an opening hand, shortness in the opening bid suit (at most a doubleton) and 3-card support for all unbid suits (at least Jxx).¹

If by agreement, you would make a takeout double with minimum values (12-14 hcp) which does not show shortness in the opening “bid suit” or support for all “unbid suits” this is a Minimum Offshape Takeout Double and **must** be marked on the convention card by checking the **Min. Offshape T/O** box in the **SPECIAL DOUBLES** section on the back of the convention card.

SPECIAL DOUBLES

After Overcall: Penalty _____
Negative thru _____
Responsive : thru _____ Maximal
Support: Dbl. thru _____ Redbl
Card-showing Min. Offshape T/O

ACBL’s instructions for checking this box are:

Min. Offshape T/O: Check this box if, by agreement, you make takeout doubles with minimum hands which do not show support for the unbid suits. For example, if your T/O of an opening 1♠ bid with ♠KJx, ♥xx, ♦AQxx, ♣Kxxx would not be unexpected to partner.

ACBL – In its series on Conventional Wisdom: Filling Out the Convention Card, ACBL recently published, “A takeout double of an opening bid usually shows a hand with opening values and shortness in the opener’s suit. It also suggests support for the unbid suits. Some players, however, will make a takeout double on any hand with minimal opening values (the 12 to 14 hcp range) even if the patten isn’t classic. If after RHO’s 1♥ opening, you would double with a hand such as ♠A5 ♥K873 ♦KJ64 ♣Q85, check the box.”²

Most conventions are subject to different usage and interpretations. While the principles of Takeout Doubles are straightforward some may make a Takeout Double with other types of hands. In application, it is imperative to discuss and have a partnership agreement on the application of Takeout Doubles. In addition, it is import to protect your self by checking the opponents’ agreements.

From a Tournament Director’s viewpoint, ACBL’s Mike Flader addresses two circumstances.³ In the first circumstance Flader address the double of 1♣ or 1♦ holding a doubleton in the unbid minor. If a partnership had an agreement that would double 1♣ holding ♠AJxx, ♥KJxx, ♦10x, ♣Axx or would double 1♦ holding ♠Axxx, ♥KJxx, ♦Axx, ♣Qx, then the partnership should check the box on **Min. Offshape T/O Double** and should alert the bid. [Note: Flader’s September 2001 decision to alert the bid was prior to the most recent alert changes. Rich Colker for the ACBL Conventions and Competitions Committee stated that no double requires an alert except those with highly unusual or unexpected meanings (e.g., Support Double). This is supported by the fact that the newest convention card shows **Min. Offshape T/O Double** in black not red.]

In the second circumstance, Flader address the issue of doubling 1 of a major without four of the other major. Flader states that doubling 1♥ holding the following hand ♠KQ10, ♥xx, ♦AJ9x, ♣KJxx seems standard and would not require the partnership to check the box on **Min. Offshape T/O Double**.

Savannah Double – I refer to the Min. Offshape T/O Double as a Savannah Double to bring attention to and remind you of the fact that it is the bidder's responsibility to check the opponent's convention card and/or ask for an explanation of opponents' agreements. You should protect yourself in the auction. It is common practice for some players/clubs to make/condone minimal offshape takeout doubles. The Savannah, GA club, for example, has taught and the directors condone, ACBL rules to the contrary, that it is not only ok but one is expected to double a 1-level opening bid to show an opening hand regardless of shape or support for the unbid suits. Beware of local or common practices and always ask for an explanation of agreements.

See Barbara Seagram and Marc Smith, *25 Bridge Conventions You Should Know* (Toronto: Master Point Press, ISBN 1-894154-07-X) 21-32.

Minimum Offshape Takeout Doubles

¹ Seagram, *25 Bridge Conventions*, p.24.

² ACBL, *Bridge Bulletin: Conventional Wisdom*, Part 12 (July 2005) p.41.

³ ACBL, *Bridge Bulletin: Ruling the Game* (September 2001) p.99.