

BRIDGE – INTERMEDIATE LESSONS I – 10

RESPONDING TO PARTNER'S OVERCALL AND TAKE-OUT DOUBLE

After Your Partner Overcalls

1. Responding to Partner's overcall is different than responding to a one-level opening bid. There is no requirement to answer with six or more points, and a new suit by the Responder is not even forcing.
2. With three or more cards in the Overcaller's suit, the highest priority is to raise it, especially if Partner's suit be one of the Majors. After a 1-level overcall, it takes 6-10 points to raise Partner's suit to the 2-level, and 11-12 points to raise Partner's suit to the 3-level. After a 2-level overcall, it takes 8-11 points to raise Partner's suit to the 3-level.
3. Without adequate support for the Overcaller's suit (fewer than three cards) the Responder has to proceed with caution. A new suit at the 1-level would promise 8-15 HCP's and a very good 5-card or longer suit. A new suit at the 2-level would promise 10-15 HCP's. Responding with an overcall with a Major suit of one's own does not deny support for Partner's Minor suit overcall, but responding with a Minor suit, usually denies support for Partner's Major suit overcall. A **1-NT** response would show a balanced hand with 8-10 high-card points and stoppers in the other suits, with particular emphasis on the suit or suits bid by the Opponents.
4. An artificial bid of the Opponents bid suit (A "**cue-bid**") shows Trump support for Partner's overcalled suit, with a limit-raise or better (11+ HCP's) in support of Partner such that the Partnership has Game likely if the Overcaller has opening count.

Example: 1D 1H P "**2D**"

After Your Partner "**Doubles**"

1. A **Take-Out Double** forces his/her Responding Partner to bid, even with zero HCP's, unless there is a bid by the Opponent to the Responder's right.
2. Answer a Take-Out Double by choosing an un-bid suit, according to the size of the hand. With 0-8 high-card points select a suit at the lowest available level. (e.g., 1D - X - P - **1H**) With 9-11 high-card points skip a level of bidding. (e.g., 1D - X - P - **2H**)
3. The criterion for picking a suit is length. Given a choice between long suits, however, preference is usually given to a Major suit rather than to a Minor suit. If the Major/Minor card length is 4-4 or 4-5, bid the Major. If it is 4-6, bid the Minor suit; i.e. differs in length by two or more pieces.
4. A response of **1-NT** promises 8-10 high-card points, a balanced hand with at least one stopper in the Opponent's suit, and no 4-card Major suit to bid.

5. A Cue-Bid in the Opponent's suit shows Game values and asks the Doubler to choose the suit, and a Game-Level response also shows opening count.

Your Left-hand Opponent (LHO) has opened the bidding and Partner has made a Take-Out Double. Should you bid on or, alternatively, "*Pass*," thereby converting Partner's Take-Out Double to a penalty scenario? **Answer:** Convert it to a penalty by "*Passing*" if you satisfy "**Mel's Rule of 9**."

Deciding to "Pass" Partner's Take-Out Double – "Mel's Rule of 9"

If the number of cards you hold in the Opponent's suit added to the number of honors you hold in that suit (including the 10) plus the level of the contract equals 9 or more, "PASS."

Your LHO has opened the bidding as follows, and Partner has made a Take-Out Double. Should you, holding the following, "bid on," or "Pass?"

<u>North</u>	<u>East (Partner)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (You)</u>
1C	Double	Pass	???

You Hold: a) 96, K74, 63, KQT532 ("*Pass!*" You hold 6 cards in the Opponent's suit, plus 3 honors in their suit, Clubs, plus a contract level of 1 for a grand total of "10." - Mel's "Rule of 9" has been satisfied!)