



Responding to Overcall and Takeout Doubles

When both sides are bidding the auction is completely different from an *uncontested auction*.

When each side has a good trump fit they can both make a lot of tricks.

The **Law of Total Tricks** says that the total number of tricks equals the total trump length held by both sides

Eg NS have 10 spades, EW 10 hearts. There are 20 Total Tricks.

If NS can make 10 tricks in spades EW can make 10 in hearts.

If NS can make 11 tricks in spades EW can make 9 in hearts – and vice versa.

If NS can make 12 tricks in spades EW can make 8 in hearts – and vice versa, and so on.

In theory you should compete to the level of your trump fit: to the 2-level with 8 trump, the 3-level with 9.

In competitive auctions counting points will not help: what matters is the degree of trump fit, and controls.

When you have found your fit, but opponents may not have uncovered theirs, it is good strategy to jump as high as you dare to make it difficult for them. When they have found their fit you should be chary of revealing yours in case that goads them into a good contract they might not otherwise bid.

Cue-bids

A cue-bid is a bid in a suit you cannot possibly want to play in.

We have seen cuebids in slam auctions, where, once a suit is agreed, they show **control** in the suit bid.

In competitive auctions there is another type of cuebid – a bid of a suit opponents have already bid naturally.

Since we are unlikely to wish to play in their suit, we use this cuebid as **an artificial way to show strength**.

Obviously this cuebid is forcing! It shows a good hand that cannot be described by a natural bid.

The Cue-bid as a Response to a Takeout Double

Normally respond to partner's takeout double by bidding your longest suit: a minimum bid shows 0-9HCP, a jump shows 8+ with a 5+card suit, or 10+ with a 4+card suit.

Occasionally you will have a better hand that wants to be in game. With a good 6+card suit you can jump to game in a major, or perhaps bid 3NT with a minor and a stopper in their suit.

If you are not sure which game you want to be in – you have 2 suits, or a balanced hand with no stopper, or a single stopper – you can cuebid their suit.

West	North	East	South				
1♦	Dbl	Pass	?	♠KQ32	♠J94	♠A82	
				♥AQ95	♥K2	♥AJ6	
				♦J953	♦J52	♦Q86	
				♣3	♣AKJ542	♣K542	
				2♦. Partner may be 4-3 in the majors. He bids his cheaper 4card major and you raise to game	2♦. You want to be in 3NT if partner has a diamond stopper. He will show a major and you bid 3♣. Since you have no major he will bid 3NT if he can	2♦. A strong hand with nothing to bid! Your next bid will be 3NT, showing a dodgy stopper. Partner may remove to a 5-card suit.	



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Distributional Raises

In competitive auctions you want to raise partner when you have trump length whether you have high cards or not. We can make it easier for partner to make sensible competitive decisions later in the auction if we can distinguish between raises based mainly on distributional values and raises based on high cards.

We do this by using a **jump raise** to show mainly distributional values, and a **cuebid of opponents' suit** to show less distribution and more high cards. We call the cuebid an **unassuming cue-bid (UCB)**

Jump raises suggest that partner may wish to sacrifice over opponents' game: raising via the cue-bid shows a hand with defensive values and suggests that partner should bid on only if he expects to make his contract.

West	North	East	South			
1♦	1♠	Pass	?	♠KQ32	♠K94	♠A82
				♥2	♥K2	♥42
				♦J9543	♦A542	♦Q986
				♣943 ♣J853 ♣9542		
				3♠. A raise based purely on distribution support	2♦. Less distribution more high card strength	2♠. The single raise shows 3card
				Few defensive values. Lots of defence		and limited values.