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# Bidding Basics

## Conventional interference

It is hard enough to learn conventions. Knowing what to do when the opponents interfere with them is even tougher. There are a few situations in this article that will occur frequently. Being prepared for interference is part of learning any convention.

### Interference after Stayman

If we open 1NT and partner responds 2♣, what if the next player comes in? For example, 1NT-(Pass)-2♣-(2♥). To keep things simple, let's agree that opener can double with hearts for penalty. Opener may (but doesn't have to) bid 2♠ with four spades. Opener can also pass (there is no longer a need to answer which says "no four-card major"). So, double 2♥ with:

♠A 2 ♥A J 9 7 ♦K 3 2 ♣A 10 7 6,

bid 2♠ with:

♠A J 8 7 ♥A 2 ♦K 3 2 ♣A 10 7 6,

and pass with:

♠A 4 3 ♥K 2 ♦K 7 6 5 ♣K Q 8 7.

### Interference after a Jacoby transfer

The most likely interference after partner's Jacoby transfer is a lead-directing double. For example, 1NT-(Pass)-2♥-(Dbl). The opponent's double means they have hearts and want a heart lead. Now what? Do you still have to accept the transfer and bid 2♠? No! Partner gets another chance to bid. You can pass. What would pass mean? It would not say that you want to play in 2♥ doubled (quite unlikely). The simplest/best thing to do here (assuming the partnership can remember) is to play that accepting the transfer (bidding 2♠)

promises at least three-card spade support. Pass shows only two spades. So, after 1NT-(Pass)-2♥-(Dbl), pass with:

♠Q 7 ♥A 7 6 ♦A Q 7 6 ♣K J 7 6,

but bid 2♠ with:

♠Q 10 7 ♥A 7 6 ♦A Q 6 ♣K J 7 6.

If you want redouble to be for business, that is OK, but risky. Maybe you would redouble with:

♠A 2 ♥A Q 10 8 ♦A K 2 ♣8 7 6 5.

If the opponents overcall after partner's transfer, opener will usually pass (remember that responder could have zero points). To accept the transfer (and it would have to be at the three level once they interfere), opener should have both a maximum and four-card support. So, after 1NT-(Pass)-2♥-(3♣), pass with:

♠K 6 5 ♥K Q 6 ♦A Q J 2 ♣J 3 2,

but bid 3♠ with:

♠K Q 10 7 ♥A K J 6 ♦A 8 2 ♣10 2.

### Lead-directing doubles

Any time you make an artificial bid and the opponents double, it is lead-directing. Generally, you should ignore their lead-directing doubles. More importantly, make sure you and your partner know that if you double the opponent's Stayman bid (2♣ or 3♣) or their transfer bid or Blackwood response (and many more conventional artificial bids), that you are showing that artificial suit and suggesting that partner lead the suit. For example, after (1NT)-(Pass)-(2♣), double with:

♠8 7 6 ♥7 6 5 ♦3 2 ♣A Q J 10 9.

After (1NT)-(Pass)-(2♥), double with:

♠J 7 6 ♥A K 10 8 7 ♦A 2 ♣7 6 5.

Also, double after (1♥)-(Pass)-(3♥)-(Pass); (4NT)-(Pass)-(5♣) with:

♠6 5 4 ♥J 2 ♦J 7 6 5 ♣A K 8 7.

To double for the lead at a low level, you should have not only a good suit, but at least five cards in the suit; otherwise, the opponents could redouble and play there! At a higher level (like after their Blackwood response), you don't need length in the suit (they are not playing in that suit).

### Interference after Blackwood

There is a mnemonic called DOPI (among others) where the letters stand for Double = 0 and Pass = 1. There are lots of variations, and it never comes up. I find it impractical to even have an agreement because when it comes up three years from now, nobody will remember the agreement. I only mentioned it because it seems to be popular. People put it on their convention card but never use it.

### Other interference

There are many more situations where our conventions can be interfered with. However, I don't think it practical to mention those that come up once a year. For example, the opponents might double your strong 2♣ opening. They might interfere after you've used Jacoby 2NT or a splinter bid. It is good to have a default rule for all such situations. Though there are technically better solutions (that require too much memory), let's just say, "ignore interference." Suppose it goes 1♥-(Pass)-2NT-(Dbl). The opponents have doubled. That's strange. But just ignore it and answer as if they had passed.



What if they overcall? It goes 1♥–(Pass)–2NT–(3♦), for example. Still ignore it. Jumping to 4♥ is weak, while 3♥ is stronger. There are some complications, and yes, you do have extra bids available such as pass and double. You could define everything. Long-time regular partnerships would do so. But would you and your partner remember such agreements when they come up two years from now? Not likely. So, just ignore interference unless you think you and your partner have discussed (and memorized) otherwise.

### Interference after our 1NT

I would be remiss not to mention a popular convention called lebensohl (yes, with a small “l” – don’t ask). When we open 1NT and the opponents overcall, it is a pain in the neck. Even more so if their overcall is conventional (such as 2♦ to show diamonds and a major). Now what? This is a major headache. Unless you want to study lebensohl, there is no easy solution. I do recommend that double is not for penalty (it should show cards/takeout). I know that “stolen bid” is popular – where 1NT–(2♦)–Dbl means “you stole my bid” so it is a transfer to hearts – but it isn’t really a good method. Let’s say 2♦ meant diamonds and a major, and as responder to 1NT you held:

♠K 10 8 2 ♥K 7 2 ♦4 2 ♣Q 8 7 6.

I’d want to be able to double to show something like that. If double means “transfer to hearts,” you’d be totally stuck. 😞

### Bidding Basics Quiz

As opener, what is your call after 1NT–(Pass)–2♣–(2♦) with:

- 1) ♠A 3 2 ♥A 7 2 ♦K Q 10 8 ♣K 3 2
- 2) ♠A Q 10 8 ♥J 10 2 ♦5 4 ♣A K Q 3

As opener, what is your call after 1NT–(Pass)–2♦–(Dbl) with:

- 3) ♠A Q 9 8 7 ♥K 2 ♦Q 3 2 ♣A 10 8
- 4) ♠K 2 ♥A Q 2 ♦J 5 4 ♣A Q 7 6 5

What is your call after (1NT)–Pass–(2♣) with:

- 5) ♠8 7 ♥A 3 2 ♦7 6 5 ♣K Q J 9 8
- 6) ♠K Q 2 ♥Q J 2 ♦8 7 6 5 2 ♣A Q

What is your call after (1NT)–Pass–(2♦) with:

- 7) ♠K Q 2 ♥A 7 6 ♦Q 8 7 6 5 ♣3 2
- 8) ♠6 5 4 ♥5 4 3 ♦A K J 10 7 ♣3 2

### Bidding Basics Quiz Answers

- 1) Double. For penalty (simple).
- 2) 2♠. Showing four spades.
- 3) Pass. Showing only two hearts.
- 4) 2♥. Showing three or more hearts
- 5) Double. Lead directing.
- 6) Pass. Not only are you unsure you

- want a club lead, but you need length (at least five) at this low level. You have no defense against 2♣.
- 7) Pass. Not nearly the right hand or suit for a lead-directing double.
- 8) Double. You want a diamond lead. Take a chance.