

The Rule of 9

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<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaBidding/RuleOf9.pdf>

Last Revised May 21, 2024

Mel Colchamiro's **rule of nine**¹, tells a player when to trap pass and leave partner's takeout double in for penalty (conversion). If the length of the opponent's suit held, the level and the number of honours, 10 and higher, sum up to nine or higher, the opponent must play doubled. A trap pass is made, and a takeout double is passed. Outside sure tricks are +1. Support for partner is -1 (three cards) or -2 (four cards).

A player must stretch to reopen the auction with a double when partner passes an overcall by his RHO if he has two cards or fewer in the suit. This also applies when an opponent overcalls 1NT with 2♣. Since a double of 2♣ is Stayman, to penalize 2♣, a pass must be made and partner must double for takeout.

W	N	E	S
		1♠	2♣
P	P	dbl	P
P	P		

West holds ♠2 ♥A32 ♦6543 ♣KQ982

The calculation is:

Number of clubs	= 5
Number of honours	= 2 (98 are nice and could be counted as 0.5)
Level of Overcall	= 2
♥Ace	= 1
	10 is greater or equal to 9

¹ Colchamiro, Mel, *How you can play like an expert (w/o having to be one)*, Sarasota, FL, USA: Magnus Books, 2007, page 29.

A double by West is a negative double. Therefore, he must pass 2♣ smoothly in tempo and pass East's takeout double converting it to penalty. East is doubling under, and this is almost always for takeout. Doubling under for penalty when club honours are in the pocket (finessable) is not desirable. If West takes some time to pass 2♣, the director will not let East's double stand.

West also should never cash the ♥ Ace and save it to kill something in South's hand. West has a spade opening lead and will exit diamonds. If East gives a large spade to be ruffed, he asks for a heart return, otherwise diamonds are the exit cards.