Counter to "Either/Or" Defences to 1♣ (by Bruce Watson)

After we open 1♣, an either/or defence by the opponents is one where a call by next to speak shows either one group of suits **or** a second different group of suits. A "group" may have one or two suits. Two examples are Suction and Psycho Suction.

In basic Suction, after our 1♣, the suit bids 1♦, 1♥, 1♠, 2♣, etc show either a one-suited hand with the next suit or a two-suited hand with the next two suits above the one-suited possibility. For example, a 1♥ overcall shows either a one-suited hand with spades or a two-suiter with clubs and diamonds. A 1**NT** overcall shows both rounded suits while **X** shows both pointed suits. Here we describe a counter to their Suction bids.

Responder's next three **suit bids** above their Suction call follow the 3-step scheme below in every case. HCP requirements are about 6+ at the one-level and 8+ at the two-level.

Step 1 Bidding their one-suiter is like a negative double of their single advertised suit. Emphasis is on the other major or unbid majors.
Step 2 Bidding the cheaper suit in their "2-group" is a takeout of their advertised group of two suits.
Step 3 Bidding the higher-ranking suit in their 2-group is a transfer showing 5+ cards in the fourth suit.

Pass is forcing and shows either a weak hand (0-5 HCP) or a **trap pass of the single-suited hand**. A pass followed by a bid in the single suit is natural and forcing. **The minimum notrump** shows a balanced 10+ HCP. **X** is catchall. It shows 6+ HCP and a hand that does not fit one of the above. In most cases responder will have a balanced hand with 4-3-3-3 or 4-4-3-2. If the latter, responder has at least one suit in the 2-group.

If the overcall is **X**, showing the majors or pointed suits, we ignore it and bid normally. Flips and minor-suit transfers apply. If the overcall is 1**NT**, showing the minors or rounded suits, we counter as follows. Pass is weak. Major suit flips apply at the 2-level, **X** shows something like 6+ HCP with at least one 4+ minor and no 4-card major. No transfers to the minors. Bidding the cheaper suit in their "2-group" is a two-suited takeout of their advertised group of two suits. Some examples follow.

In Psycho Suction, a suit overcall shows either a one-suited hand with the overcalled suit or a two-suited hand with the next two suits. For example, a 1♥ overcall shows either a one-suited hand with hearts or both spades and clubs.

In our counter to Psycho Suction, Step 1 is **X** which is like a negative double of the single suit. Emphasis is on the other major or unbid majors. Step 2 is a cue-bid of the cheaper suit in their 2-group and is a takeout of the 2-group. Step 3 is a cue-bid of the higher-ranking suit in the 2-group showing 5+ cards in the 4th suit. **Pass** is forcing and shows either a weak hand (0-5 HCP) or a trap pass of the single suit. A pass followed by a bid in the single suit is natural and forcing. **The minimum notrump** shows a balanced 10+ HCP and is game-forcing.

Some examples versus basic Suction.

1♣ (1♥) ?	Intervenor is showing either a one-suiter with spades or a two-suiter with both clubs and diamonds. **Pass**: weak (0-5) or a trap pass of spades (6+ HCP). The only way to show spades is to pass then bid the suit at your next turn. **1♠**: (step 1) normal takeout double of spades. **1NT**: balanced 10+. GF. **2♣**: (step 2) takeout showing both majors. **2♦**: (step 3) 5+ hearts. **X**: inability to make any other call and shows 6+ HCP.
1♣ (1NT) ?	Assume in this case that intervenor is showing the minors. **Pass**: Weak. **2♣**: Takeout showing both majors. **2♥**: A flip showing 4+ spades and 6+ HCP. **2♠**: A flip showing 4+ hearts and 6+ HCP. **X**: None of the above and 6+ HCP
1♣ (1NT) ?	Assume in this case that intervenor is showing the rounded suits. **Pass**: Weak. **2♣**: Takeout showing diamonds and spades. **2♥**: A flip showing 4+ spades and 6+ HCP. **2♠**: A flip showing heart stoppers and 6+ HCP. **X**: None of the above and 6+ HCP

If the opponents play inverted suction or inverted psycho suction use the same responses as if not inverted.