

BRIDGE – BEGINNER’S LESSONS I - 07

Responses To Partner’s Simple Overcall

General Thoughts: - Do not rush to rescue your Partner who has overcalled in a suit to your disliking, especially when you have nothing of any real value of your own. Do not, without good reason, rush to rescue a Partner who has been doubled for penalties. Better to pass quickly without consternation thereby avoiding conveying the idea to your adversaries that you are in trouble. Rescue a doubled Partner only if you can be reasonably certain that your suit may be better than his/hers, and that you have considered that your rescue bid may take your team to the next bidding level thereby increasing your trick commitment. It is sometimes better to swallow the bitter pill and let your overcalling Partner go down in a contract of his/her choosing, than to go flying off in a rescuing venture which is, potentially, even more disastrous.

Types of Responsive Actions to Overcalls

1. **RAISES** - A simple raise of Partner's overcalled suit shows:
 - a. At least a 3-card support (Partner has overcalled with at least a five-card suit).
 - b. a HCP count (6-10 HCP's) of less than an opening bid (implied is that under no circumstances can this combination produce a game if overcaller has no more than a simple overcall).

Examples: 1H 1S P 2S (or) 1H 1S 2C 2S

2. **NO-TRUMP RESPONSES** - Constructive in nature showing:
 - a. Little interest for partner's overcalled suit
 - b. At least one stopper in opponent's bid suit(s)
 - c. 8-12 HCP's at the 1-level, and 13-14 HCP's at the 2-level
 - d. A necessary variance to the above with both the vulnerability and the level of the response.

Example: 1H 1S P 1-NT

3. **SUIT TAKE -OUTS** (a change of Partner's overcalled suit) - Is usually non-forcing upon Partner and shows a good 5-card suit of his/her own.

Examples: 1C 1H P 1S (or) 1D 1S 2D 2H

Note: - When there is a choice between showing your own suit and supporting your Partner's overcall, if your Partner has bid a Major suit, by all means support him/her rather than search for a fit in a Minor suit of your own. If, on the other hand, your Partner has bid a Minor suit, then try your own Major suit if your hand is sufficiently strong as to have had an independent overcall of your own.

4. **CUE-BID** - An artificial bid of the Opponent's first bid suit showing:
 - a. Trump support for Partner's overcalled suit
 - b. At least invitational values (11+ HCP's) such that Partnership has game likelihood if Overcaller also has at or near Opening count or beyond.

Examples: 1D 1H P “2D” (or) 1C 1H 1S “2C”

RESPONDING TO OVERCALLS

After Your Partner Overcalls

1. Responding to an overcall is different from 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 Over-caller's suit the highest priority is to raise it. After a 1-level overcall it takes 6-10 points to raise to the 2- level and 11-12 points to raise to the 3-level. After a 2-level overcall it takes 8-11 points to raise 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 good 5-card or longer suit. A new suit at the 2-Level would promise 10-15 high-card points. 1-NT would show a balanced hand with 8-10 high-card points and a stopper(s) in Opener's suit.

OUTLINE FOR BEGINNERS' LESSON SEVEN

RESPONDING TO OVERCALLS

Sequence of Topics

- A. Per usual, begin with a review of the previous lesson. Make sure your students are clear on the basic concepts, since they are critical for the present lesson.
- B. Discuss the role of the responder when partner makes an overcall.
 - 1. Remind the class that an overcall is not an opening bid. Therefore, the rules for responding are different.
 - a) The responder is not required to answer with six or more points.
 - b) The responder gives priority to raising the overcaller's suit as opposed to bidding new ones or NT.
 - c) A new suit by the responder is *not* a forcing bid.
 - 2. With a fit for the overcaller's suit (i.e., with three or more cards in support) the size of the responder's hand determines the level of the raise:
 - a) With 0-5 points the hand is too weak to raise .just pass.
 - b) With 6-10 points raise a one-level overcall to the 2-level. With 11-12 points raise a one-level overcall to the 3-level.
 - c) With 8-11 points raise a two-level overcall to the 3-level.
 - d) With stronger hands the responder should consider jumping directly to game, bearing in mind of course that a one-level overcall could have as few as 10 points.*

* More advanced players would use a cue bid to show a very strong responding hand. Beginners have a hard time with this notion, so it is recommended that you avoid discussing it.

3. Without a fit for the overcaller's suit, the responder has to bid very carefully.
 - a) A new suit at the one level promises eight or more points, a very good five-card or longer suit, and a poor fit for the overcaller's suit. A new suit at the two level promises 10 or more points.
 - b) 1NT suggests a balanced hand with 8-10 high-card points, stoppers in the other suits (especially the one bid by the opponents), and precisely two cards in the over-caller's suit.
- C. Discuss the role of the responder when partner makes a takeout double.
1. Unlike the overcall, the takeout double has the same strength as an opening bid. The double, however, must be removed, which means the responder is obligated to answer, even with zero points.
 2. The specific responses depend upon the size of the hand.
 - a) With 0-8 points the responder chooses an unbid suit at the lowest available level.
 - b) With 9-11 points the responder chooses an unbid suit but skips one level to show it (e.g., 1S-X-P-3C).
 - c) With stronger hands the responder can proceed directly to game. *
 3. The responder generally chooses the suit to bid by length. With two long suits, however, a major takes priority over a minor.
- * Again, a cue bid would be technically correct but not a good idea for beginners.
4. A 1-NT response is never made with a weak hand. It is a voluntary action which shows 8-10 high-card points, a balanced hand with a stopper in the opponent's suit, and no 4-card major suit to bid.

II Notes

- A. Since this lesson involves many new numbers and rules, it is easy to lose your audience under their weight. You might prefer to eliminate some of the lesser items mentioned above to effect an easier presentation. -
- B. Be sure to use lots of examples to clarify the main principles.

PRACTICE HANDS FOR THE FOLLOW-UP SESSION

BEGINNERS' LESSON SEVEN

HAND 13

	K2		
	8765		
	Q765		
	987		
87		A6543	Dealer: North
KQJ32		A109	Declarer: West
AJ10		K98	Contract: 3S
432		65	Lead: C9
	QJ109		
	4		
	432		
	AKQJ10		

- a) The recommended auction is:

P— P—1C—IH
P—3H---P--- P

Be sure to explain why East bids 3H rather than 1S or 2H (1S is non-forcing, 2H shows 6-10 points) and why West passes 3H (West is minimum for the overcall).

- b) Declarer needs to trump the third club to guarantee nine tricks and to guess who has the DQ to make 10 tricks (explain what is meant by a two-way finesse).