

BRIDGE – BEGINNER’S LESSONS I – 07

Responses To Partner’s Simple Overcall

General Thoughts: - The Partner of an Overcaller is called the “**Advancer**.” An “Advancer” should not rush to rescue Partner when he/she dislikes the overcalled suit, especially when holding nothing of any real value of his/her own. In addition, the “**Advancer**” should not, without good reason, rush to save a Partner who has been “**doubled**” for penalties. Better to “**pass**” quickly without consternation thereby avoiding conveying the idea to your adversaries that the Partnership might possibly be in trouble. An “Advancer” should attempt to rescue a “**doubled**” Partner **only** if he/she can be reasonably certain that his/her suit may be better than Partner’s, especially if the rescue bid takes your team to the next bidding level, thereby increasing your Partnership’s 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 by an “Advancer”

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 high-card point (HCP) count (6-10 HCP's) less than an opening bid (implied is that under no circumstances can this combination produce a Game if the Overcaller has no more than a simple overcall).

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

2. **NO-TRUMP RESPONSES** - Constructive in nature showing:

a. Little or no interest in Partner's overcalled suit

b. At least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit(s)

c. (8-12 HCP's) if at the 1-level, and (13-14 HCP's) if at the 2-level

d. A necessary variance to the above subject to both the vulnerability and the level of the

No-Trump response.

Example: 1H 1S P 1-NT 1D 1H P 2-NT

3. **SUIT TAKE-OUTS** (a change of Partner's overcalled suit by the “Advancer”) - 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 a likelihood bidding and achieving a Game-level contract, if the Overcaller also has at or near Opening count, or beyond.

Example: 1D 1H P “2D”

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 Overcaller's Partner, the "**Advancer**," is **not** even forcing.

2. With three or more cards in the Overcaller'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 the overcalled suit to the 3-level.

3. **Without** adequate support for the Overcaller's suit (fewer than three cards) the "**Advancer**" must 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 “Advancer” 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 potential “Advancer” is not required to answer with six or more high-card points (HCP's).

b) The “Advancer” gives priority to raising the Overcaller's suit as opposed to bidding a new one or No-Trump.

c) A new suit bid by the “Advancer” is not a forcing bid.

2. With a fit for the Overcaller's suit (i.e., with three or more cards in support) the strength of the Advancer'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 even stronger hands the “Advancer” should consider jumping directly to Game, bearing in mind of course that a 1-level overcall could have as few as 8 high-card points.*

* More advanced Players would use a cue bid to show a very strong responding hand in support of the Overcaller's suit. 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 "Advancer must bid very carefully.

a) A new suit at the 1-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 2-level promises 10 or more high-card points.

b) **1-NT** 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 Overcaller's suit (a lack of support).

C. Discuss the role of the "Advancer" when Partner makes a Take-Out Double.

1. Unlike the overcall, the Take-Out Double has the same or equivalent strength as an opening bid. The "*double*," however, must be addressed, which means the "Advancer" is obligated to answer, even with zero high-card points, unless he/she is desirous of converting the Take-Out to a penalty scenario.

2. The specific responses depend upon the strength of the Advancer's hand.

a) With 0-8 high-card points, the "Advancer" chooses an un-bid suit at the lowest available level.

b) With 9-11 high-card points, the "Advancer" chooses an un-bid suit, but skips one level to show it (e.g., **1S- X- P- 3C**).

c) With stronger hands the "Advancer" can proceed directly to Game.

3. The "Advancer generally chooses the suit to bid by length. With two long suits, however, a Major suit takes priority over a Minor suit. If the Minor suit differs by two or more pieces, the Minor suit is, alternatively, chosen.

* 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.

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: 3H
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 in order to guarantee nine tricks and to guess who has the DQ to make 10 tricks (explain what is meant by a “**two-way finesse**”).