

## BRIDGE – INTERMEDIATE LESSONS I – 05

### Competitive Bidding - Overcalls

An “**Overcall**” is a competitive bid to indicate a long suit that might serve as Trumps for your side should your team win the auction process. It takes place after the Opponents have already entered the auction with an opening bid. It is also a lead-directing bid in case you have to defend.

#### Typically, an overcall shows:

- a) 8-15 high-card points at the 1-level, and 10-15 high-card points at the 2-level.
- &**
- b) Five or more cards and a suit of excellent quality. Some variations to consider:
    - 1) With two good 5-card suits overcall in the higher-ranked one first, hoping for room to bid the other one later.
    - 2) With an overcall-type hand with 16 or more high-card points it is necessary to begin with a **Take-Out Double** and to then bid your long suit at a later turn to bid.
    - 3) With a very strong 6-card or longer suit but too few points for a simple overcall, make a jump bid to pre-empt the auction, a “**Jump-Overcall.**”

#### Responding to Partner’s Overcall *with* support:

An overcall is *not* a forcing bid, but the Responder is encouraged to raise the suit with three or more cards in support.

(A “**Golden Fit**” is thus evidenced when Partner is supported.)

- a) With 6-10 high-card points raise a one-level overcall to the 2-level. With 8-10 (or a bad 11) raise a 2-level overcall to the 3-level.
- b) With 11 or more high-card points you can cue-bid the Opponent’s suit in order to invite to Game.
- c) With 0-5 HCP’s one option, other than “*Passing,*” is to jump-raise Partner’s overcall which is a pre-emptive call. Based upon the “**LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS**”, Responder should jump to a level wherein the number of tricks to which the pre-emptive call commits is equal to the total number of pieces of Trump held by the combined hands of the Partnership; e.g., a 3-level call would guarantee 9-pieces, a 4-level would guarantee 10-pieces, etc.

#### Responding to Partner’s Overcall *without* support:

Without support for the overcaller’s suit, Partner must bid with caution.

- a) A new suit at the 1-level shows five or more cards with 8-15 high-card points, and one at the 2-level shows 10-15 HCP’s. Both are non-forcing calls.
- b) **1-NT** response shows a balanced hand, 8-10 high-card points, and at least one stopper in the Opponent’s bid suit. A **2-NT** response would show 11-12 high-card points, also with at least one stopper in the Opponent’s bid suit.
- c) A cue-bid of the Opponent’s bid suit promises 13 or more high-card points, as does a jump-shift into a new suit. Both are Game-forcing.

# Types of Overcalls

1. **Simple Overcalls** - At least 8-HCP's at the 1-level and 10 HCP'S at the 2-level PLUS at least a 5-card Suit or better.

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

2. **A Takeout Double** - A holding, equivalent, or better, in comparison to Opener's hand.

Examples: 1H **Double** (or) 1-NT **Double**

3. **A Weak Jump Overcall** - A pre-emptive bid with less than an opening HCP value and at least a 6-card suit. (Similar to an opening weak 2-bid) The HCP's are usually concentrated in the bid suit and is, therefore, a hand of little defensive strength.

Examples: 1C **2D** (or) 1-NT **3H** (or) 1S **3C** (or) 1H **2S**

4. **A 1-NT Overcall** - An equivalent hand to a 1-NT opening with the additional guarantee of at least one stopper in the Opponent's bid suit.

Examples: 1H **1-NT** (or) 1C **1-NT**

4a. **A "Sandwich" 1-NT** - A distributional **Take-out Double** for the two as-yet un-bid suits with less than opening count and 5-5, or better in the two referenced suits

Example: 1C **Pass** 1H **1-NT** (Evidences Diamonds and Spades)

5. **The Unusual-NT Overcall** - An overcall of "2-NT" after a Suit opening used to show two 5-card or better lowest ranking suits. Is in essence, an artificial bid to be construed as a Take-Out Double for either of the two suits referenced.

Examples: 1H **"2-NT"** (or) 1S P 2S **"2-NT"**

6. **The Michael's Convention** - An advanced two-suit take-out convention which will be presented in detail later. Such bids evidence 5-5 or better in two suits.

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

7. **A Jump-Overcall (Cue-Bid) in an Opponent's (Opener's) Suit** - Shows 8 or 9 winners in your own Hand looking for Partner to supply a stopper in the Opponent's suit for a 3-NT contract.

You (East) hold the following: AX XX KX AKQJXXXX

	<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West (Partner)</u>
(a)	1H	"3H"	Pass	"3-NT" (Shows a H Stopper)
(b)	1H	"3H"	Pass	3S (Denies a Heart stopper)

8. **"Leaping Michaels"** - An artificial convention, which presents a jump to the 4-Level into one of the Minor suits after an Opponent's pre-emptive weak opening 2H or 2S bid. It shows a very strong (almost Game in hand) specified 2-suiter; namely, that Minor and the alternate un-bid Major.

	<u>North</u>	<u>East (You)</u>	
(a)	2H	"4C"	(Shows Clubs and Spades)
(b)	2S	"4D"	(Shows Diamonds and Hearts)

During a competitive auction there are multiple occasions where one must decide whether to “*bid on*,” or to “*pass*,” or to “*double*” for penalties. To assist in this matter Mel Colchamiro’s “*Rule of 23*” gives some assistance under certain conditions, as follow:

- (1) *In later rounds of bidding, avoid bidding 2-NT, unless you are certain that your side holds at least 23 HCP’s.*

<u>You Hold:</u>	AJ753	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	8	1S	1-NT
	KJ95	2D	2H
	A94	(Pass - Do Not Bid 2-NT)	

(Partner has shown weakness, usually fewer than 10 HCP’s, long Hearts, and almost always a 6-card suit. Just “Pass!”)

<u>You Hold:</u>	K753	<u>You</u>	<u>Partner</u>
	Q96		1-NT
	Q985	(Pass - Do Not Bid 2-NT)	
	94		

(If Partner holds 15 HCP’s your side falls short of the 23 HCP’s needed to make 2-NT, and if Partner holds 16 or 17, he/she will take the invitation to then bid 3-NT, a likely unmake able contract.)

- (2) *If you know your side has at least 23 HCP’s, and the Opponents ‘have the bid,’ you have only two options, “Double” ... or bid on! To “Pass” is not an option.*

<u>You Hold:</u>	K53	<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
	A86	1-NT	2S	???
	J52			
	9432			

(Partner holds, no fewer than 15 HCP’s, so together with your 8, you know that your side holds 23 or more HCP’s, and the Opponents only 17 or fewer. They are attempting to steal the contract! Do not “Pass!” “Double” for penalties.)

<u>You Hold:</u>	A3	<u>West</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>You</u>
	K864		1S	P	1-NT
	9542	2C	P	P	???
	KT2				

(What to do? Partner’s minimum opening of 13, combined with your 10, hits or exceeds 23. One thing you will not do is to “Pass.” Partner does not know you hold 10 HCP’s. You could bid 2S or 2-NT, but the bid of choice here is to “Double!”)

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Whether or not to continue to compete in stiff competition, absent any assistance from Partner can be a daunting decision. Mel Colchamiro's "*Compete Count*" to the rescue!

- 13 tricks are available
- Subtract the number of losers (assuming a "**Golden Fit**") by your losing trick count
- Subtract one expected trick that Partner is expected to cover
- The answer is the number of tricks you can contract **by yourself**.

<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>
1S	2C	Pass	3C
????			

You Hold: AQ754 KJ764 A8 4

13 possible tricks minus 5-Losers = 8 winners

+ 1 expected winner from Partner = 9 winners (Bid 3H)

<u>North (You)</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South (Partner)</u>	<u>West</u>
1S	Pass	Pass	2C
????			

You Hold: AK754 KJ76 Q8 Q4

13 possible tricks minus 7-Losers = 6 winners

+ 1 expected winner from Partner = 7 winners (Pass)

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