

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.
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- 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 bidding 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; i.e., 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 the Overcaller 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 invitational to Game, should Opener be at the top of his/her Overcall’s necessary high-card points.

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 Take-Out 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

3a. **A Strong Jump-Overcall** – Jump overcalls (1) after an Opponent's pre-emptive bid and (2) in the balancing (4th) seat, both show strong, one-suited hands. They exhibit at least a good 5-card or longer suit with 16 (+) HCP's. In most circumstances, they set the trump suit – only the final bidding level needs to be determined by Partnership consensus.

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

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 "**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; i.e. a *distributional "Take-Out Double."*

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

5. **The Unusual-NT Overcall** - An overcall of "2-NT" in the direct (2nd) seta only, 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. The **Unusual NT** overcall does *not* exist in the 4th seat

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 AKQJXXX

	<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. North East (You)

(a) 2H "4C" (Shows Clubs and Spades)
 (b) 2S "4D" (Shows Diamonds and Hearts)