

The “Suction Convention”

The “**Suction Convention**” is used to bid (to overcall or interfere) over *some* opening bids made by an Opponent. This convention is *not* permitted in events governed by the ACBL, except as a defense to some opening bids, such as a **Precision “1C,”** a strong “**2C**” opening, a “**2D Flannery**” opening, or as an overcall, in the balancing (4th) seat, subsequent to an opening call of a standard **1-NT** bid by the Intervenor’s left-hand Opponent (LHO). It is used as a 2-suited overcall.

Partner, the Advancer, in response, must first make an assumption, and then bid as cheaply as possible in order to discover the actual meaning behind the Overcall. By Partnership agreement, the distribution of the Intervenor’s holding, is generally 5-4, 4-5, or 5-5, depending on the state of vulnerability. The overcall shows the next-higher suit, or the other two, suits. This convention uses what is known as a “*transfer overcall*,” since the Overcaller is actually transferring his/her Partner into the desired suit.

The bids, when using “**Suction**,” show are conventional, they deny the suit actually bid, and show either a “*one-suiter*” in the next higher-ranking suit, or a “*two-suiter*” in the other two suits. Thus, the bids, when using “**Suction**,” are as follows:

“**2C**” = a one-suited Diamond holding, or a two-suited holding in Spades and Hearts.

“**2D**” = a one-suited holding in Hearts, or a two-suited holding in Spades and Clubs.

“**2H**” = a one-suited holding in Spades, or a two-suited holding in Clubs and Diamonds.

“**2S**” = a one-suited holding in Clubs, or a two-suited holding in Diamonds and Hearts.

“**2-NT**” = both non-touching “*Pointed*” suits (Diamonds and Spades).

“**Double**” = both non-touching “*Rounded*” suits (Clubs and Hearts).

The Partner (the Advancer) of the Overcaller (the Intervenor or “**Suction**” bidder), assumes the next-higher suit, until the bidding auction indicates otherwise. The Advancer is required to bid the next higher-ranking suit. Therefore, the Advancer (the Partner of the Intervenor) will use a relay bid, or the cheapest, next, higher suit bid possible, as a waiting bid in order to find out more about the holding of the Overcaller.

If the Overcaller (Intervenor) has the one-suited hand, he/she then “*passes*.” Otherwise, he/she bids the next, higher suit, showing that suit plus the remaining, as-yet, un-bid suit. The Advancer then takes a preference by either “*passing*,” or bidding the remaining suit.

In the case of the two latter “**Suction**” bids, the Advancer chooses from the two suits referenced by the Intervenor, either one from the “*pointed*” suits (Diamonds or Spades) following a “**2-NT**” bid by Partner, else one from the “*rounded*” suits (Clubs or Hearts) following a “**Double**” bid by Partner.