

## TIPS FOR TOPS - 2

1. With Responder having 19 or more HCP's opposite an opening bid, Slam is likely unless:
  - (1) The hand exhibits a suit miss-fit.
  - (2) Two cashable Aces are missing; i.e., no voids are present nullifying a missing Ace.
  - (3) You have a worthless doubleton; i.e., two quick losers in one of the side suits.
  - (4) You are missing one side Ace plus the King of Trumps.
  - (5) You have an 8-card Trump fit and are missing one Ace plus the Trump Queen.
  - (6) You have seen Partner's Declarer play before and must mentally subtract one trick.
  
2. Whichever Partner takes control of the hand on the way to Slam, the controlling Partner should **NEVER** utilize either of the Ace-asking Conventions (**Blackwood** or **Gerber**) when holding either a void and/or a worthless doubleton. To do so may result in the answers that are received from **Gerber** or **Blackwood**, as being worthless.
  
3. A single raise of Partner's overcall is equivalent to a single raise of an opening bid; i.e., 6-10 HCP's and at least three pieces for Partner's (5-card) bid suit. A jump-raise is pre-emptive, and a cue-bid in the Opponent's overcall suit is invitational, or better.

| West | North (Partner) | East | South (You) |
|------|-----------------|------|-------------|
| 1H   | 1S              | Pass | ????        |

- Ex: (a) **AXX XX KXXX XXXX** (6-10 HCP's - Constructive)  
 (b) **KJXX XXX XXXX XX** (0-5 HCP's - Pre-emptive)  
 (c) **AQX XX KQXXX XXX** (11+ HCP's - Invitational or better)

### A CUE-BID IS THE ONLY FORCING BID THAT CAN BE MADE BY A RESPONDER TO AN OVERCALL.

4. If Partner overcalls with a Major suit, a change to any other suit, Minor or Major, would evidence lack of support for Partner's Major suit and *is not* forcing. However, a change of Partner's Minor suit overcall to a Major suit *does not* imply lack of support for Partner's Minor suit.

| West | North (Partner) | East | South (You) |
|------|-----------------|------|-------------|
| 1C   | 1H              | Pass | ???         |

- Ex: (a) **XX JXX AKXXX XXX** (Bid 2H, 2D would deny support for Hearts.)  
 (b) **XXX XX AKXXX KXX** (Bid 2D denying support for Hearts.)

| West | North (Partner) | East | South (You) |
|------|-----------------|------|-------------|
| 1C   | 1D              | Pass | ???         |

- (c) **XX AQJXX AKX XXX** (Bid 1H, Does not negate possible Diamond support.)

5. Know your HCP ranges when it comes to bidding No-Trump in response to a 1-level overcall by Partner. A **1-NT** response = 8-11 HCP's; A **2-NT** response = 12-14 HCP's; and a **3-NT** response = 15-18 HCP's. All, of course, evidence a stopper in the Opener's bid suit as well as lack of primary support for Partner's overcall suit

| West | North (Partner) | East | South (You) |
|------|-----------------|------|-------------|
| 1C   | 1S              | Pass | ???         |

- Ex: (a) **XX AQX JXXX QXXX** (Bid 1-NT.)  
 (b) **XX AQX KXXX AXXX** (Bid 2-NT.) Is not forcing!  
 (c) **QJ AQX KQJX KXXX** (Bid 3-NT.)

6. There are times when Partner opens **1-NT**, and Responder is not capable of saving Opener by extricating the Partnership from the No-Trump scenario. **Never** attempt to utilize either the **Stayman** Convention or **Jacoby Transfers**, if conditions are not favorable.

Ex. (a) **XXXX QX XXXX JXX** (Partner opens **1-NT**, You must "**Pass**" - Cannot use **Stayman** here because a **2H** response from Opener would be unacceptable)

(b) **XXX QX QXXXX JXX** (Partner opens **1-NT**, You must "**Pass**" - Should not transfer to a Minor unless holding 6 or more pieces)

7. Once Partner has changed suits, in effect having ostensibly denying support for your overcalled suit, do **not** re-bid your suit unless you have a strong 6-card suit.

|             |                    |             |                        |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| <u>East</u> | <u>South (You)</u> | <u>West</u> | <u>North (Partner)</u> |
| 1H          | 1S                 | Pass        | 2D                     |
| Pass        | ??                 |             |                        |

Ex. (a) **AKXXX XXX X KXXX** ("**Pass.**" Partner has few Spades and you do not have Diamonds. Partner's **2D** is **not** forcing. Quit while you are behind!!)

(b) **AQJXXX XXX X AXX** (Bid **2S.**)

8. A **Take-Out Double** overcall in the direct (2<sup>nd</sup> seat) followed by a No-Trump re-bid is stronger than overcalling **1-NT** directly.

|            |             |              |             |               |
|------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| <u>Ex.</u> | <u>West</u> | <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u>  |
| (a)        | 1C          | Double       | Pass        | 1D            |
|            | Pass        | 1-NT         |             | (18-20 HCP's) |
| (b)        | 1C          | 1-NT         |             | (15-17 HCP's) |

9. After making an overcall, you can still make a **Take-out Double** providing the Opponents find a fit and Partner has not yet bid.

Ex. (East Holds) **AKXXX AJX XX KXX**

|              |             |              |                   |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <u>North</u> | <u>East</u> | <u>South</u> | <u>West</u>       |
| 1D           | 1S          | 2D           | Pass              |
| Pass         | Double      |              | (Strong enough to |

overcall Spades and then to Double. This evidences extra HCP strength, 13-16 HCP's, shortness in the Opponent's suit, and at least 3-cards ("Tolerance") in the two un-bid suits.)

10. With 8 or 9 winners in your own hand, plus a stopper in the Opener's suit, overcall **3-NT**. There is no need to use the **Take-Out Double**. **Do not worry about HCP's**; this bid shows tricks, not points.

|            |                  |             |                   |
|------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| <u>Ex.</u> | K KX AKQXXXX AXX | <u>East</u> | <u>South(You)</u> |
|            |                  | 1H          | 3-NT              |

(Are you chicken or what? Overcall 3-NT! If necessary, hide your singleton K of Spades in with your Clubs, if it eases your nerves.)

11. A direct jump overcall in the Opponent's Minor suit is a natural overcall. It shows a 6-card (+) suit with at least 10 HCP's. It is **not** a "**Michaels**" Cue-Bid!

Ex. **AX X XXX KQJXXXX**

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| <u>North</u> | <u>East(You)</u> |
| 1C           | 3C (Natural)     |