

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*** rebid 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 followed by a No-T rump rebid 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.

Ex. 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)