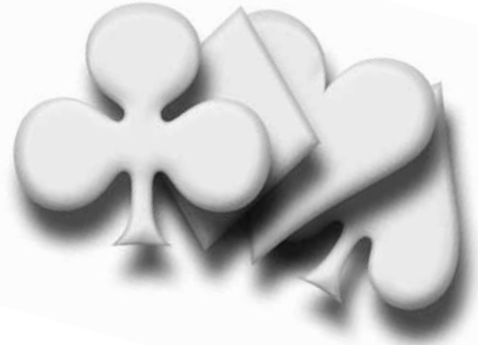


LESSON 3

Overcalls

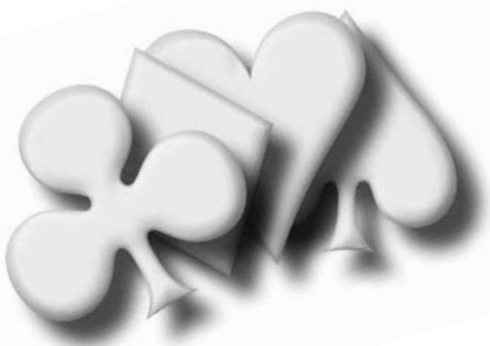


General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

Overcalls

This is the first of two lessons covering overcalls. The main focus is on natural overcalls and responses, although the concept of two-suited overcalls is introduced at the end of the lesson and will be carried over into the next lesson.

Bidding

It is assumed that the students are familiar with the general concept of simple overcalls. The lesson looks at the modern trend toward a wide range of strength for a simple overcall with preemptive jump raises by the advancer — partner of the overcaller. The recommended ACBL style is that new-suit responses are not forcing. This results in extensive use of the cuebid by the advancer. The modern style of weak jump overcalls is also recommended.

Here are the topics covered:

Simple Overcalls in a Suit

Since the other competitive action, the takeout double, shows an opening bid or better, many players tend to treat the overcall in a similar fashion. The overcall actually covers a much wider range and depends on factors such as suit quality, level and vulnerability. In addition, not every hand with 13 or more points is suitable for an overcall.

Responding to an Overcall

Most players are used to responding to an overcall in a fashion similar to responding to an opening bid. The “standard” approach recommended here is to use weak preemptive jump raises and to treat a new suit as non forcing. This requires that the cuebid be used both with a fit and with a hand strong enough to make a forcing bid in a new suit.

Rebids by the Overcaller

This section covers the overcaller’s rebid, primarily after the advancer has cuebid in response to the overcall.

Jump Overcalls in a Suit

The style recommended in this section is that of weak jump overcalls. Higher level preemptive jump overcalls are also discussed.

Overcalling a 1NT Opening — Landy

This section discusses the danger of overcalling with a moderate one-suited hand after an opponent's 1NT opening bid. It introduces the Landy convention, one of the most straightforward two-suited overcall conventions.

Handling the Opponents' Overcalls

The students should already be familiar with negative doubles from an earlier lesson. This section discusses using an immediate cuebid of the suit overcalled by responder to show a limit raise or better in opener's suit.

Play & Defense

Since the deals involve competitive actions, a variety of contracts are likely. After everyone has bid the deals, direct them to the appropriate contract. Review the bidding, let them play each deal then discuss the play and defense.

The deals in this lesson include interesting examples of discarding a loser on a loser. This is an important concept and should be worthwhile discussing with most classes.

The first deal has many possible variations in the play and the suggested contract can even be defeated with double-dummy defense. It should not be necessary, however, to go through all of the variations. Essentially, East–West will make 2 ♠ while North–South can make 4 ♦. The real emphasis is on the auction — to see the effect of a preemptive jump overcall. Each player will have decisions to make in the auction, so there is likely to be considerable diversity in the actual contracts that are reached. You can keep the discussion fairly simple by restricting it to the likely result in a contract of 2 ♠ — eight tricks.

The play of the second deal is worth discussing. If North–South get higher than 2 ♠, the defenders should defeat the contract. Even a contract of 2 ♠ is in danger unless declarer uses the loser on a loser concept. Walk through this with the class, since most of the students should be able to understand the basic idea.

The third deal also involves some complex variations since the deal will be declared from the short trump side if the auction goes as planned. In discussing the play, the emphasis should be on the importance of establishing side suits while retaining control. Most students will tend to go for ruffing a loser early instead of considering the long range plan.

The fourth deal involves another example of a loser on a loser play if the bidding and defense go as planned. This should be an effective continuation of the discussion generated from the second deal.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This is the third of four lessons focusing on competitive auctions. While overcalls may seem more straightforward than takeout doubles, they are far more common and come in a wide variety of forms — the simple overcall, the jump overcall and the two-suited overcall, for example. The modern style is to compete very aggressively, especially at matchpoint scoring. While the students should be familiar with overcalls, they are likely to be less familiar with effectively responding to overcalls.

You might start the lesson like this:

“In the previous two lessons, we started discussing competitive situations, with the emphasis on how the double can be used by both sides. In these next two lessons, we’ll be looking at overcalls.

“When an opponent opens the bidding, your side is put at a disadvantage. The opponent’s bid takes away some of the bidding room, which can make it more challenging for you to describe your hand. For example, you may no longer be able to start the auction at the one level. In addition, the opponents have already exchanged some information, making it more dangerous for you to enter the auction. Responder knows something about opener’s hand and may be able to double an overcall for penalty. As the overcaller, you don’t yet know anything about your partner’s hand.

“Nonetheless, the overcall can be an effective tool, both for getting your side into the auction and for keeping the opponents from their best contract. It comes in a variety of guises. Let’s start with the most straightforward.”

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Simple Overcalls in a Suit

Introduction

“When the opponents open the bidding, the most natural way to enter the auction is to make an overcall in a suit at the cheapest available level — a simple overcall. The overcall has several advantages:

- It tells partner something about your hand.
- It gives your side a chance to buy the contract.
- It may help push the opponents into the wrong contract.
- It may get your side off to the best lead on defense.

“For an overcall to work effectively, partner must know what to expect. Let’s look at some of the parameters for a simple overcall.”

Instructions

Ideally, you should have the cards on each table sorted into suits before the class starts.

“The cards are sorted into suits. Give each player one suit and set up the following hand for South.

“In spades: the king and a low card.

“In hearts: the ace, the queen, the jack, the ten and a low card.

“In diamonds: the king and three low cards.

“In clubs: two low cards.”

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1 ♣	1 ♥

SOUTH
 ♠ K x
 ♥ A Q J 10 x
 ♦ K x x x
 ♣ x x

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of South.

“If South is the dealer, what would South open? (1 ♥.) With 13 HCPs plus 1 length point for the five-card suit, you have a sound opening bid of 1 ♥.

“Suppose, instead, East deals and opens 1♣. What call does South make? (1♥.) East’s opening bid doesn’t prevent you from making the same bid you would have made if East had passed. Making an overcall on this hand is the appropriate competitive tool, since it provides all of the advantages you might expect. You describe your hand, in a manner similar to opening the bidding 1♥. Your side may be able to buy the contract. If you can’t buy the contract, your bid may interfere with the opponents’ auction or might get the partnership off to the best opening lead. You would certainly like North to lead a heart if, for example, West became declarer in a notrump contract.

“Would it make any difference if South were vulnerable? (No.) With a sound hand for an overcall — a good suit and approximately the values for an opening bid — vulnerability doesn’t really enter the picture. It’s similar to opening the bidding. Vulnerability isn’t a factor unless the decision is borderline.

“What if East’s opening bid is 1♠? What call would South make? (2♥.) Most players would still overcall with this hand. However, you can see one difference between an opening bid and an overcall. The opponent’s opening bid may force you to make your overcall at the two level — or higher if the opponent opens at the two level or higher. With a good suit and a good hand, that isn’t much of a problem, but it does increase the risk. Vulnerability, for example, will become a bigger factor when faced with a borderline decision. A simple overcall at the two level promises an opening hand.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away the ace.

“In clubs: add the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	Pass

SOUTH
 ♠ K x
 ♥ Q J 10 x
 ♦ K x x x
 ♣ A x x

“If South is the dealer, what would South open? (1♦.) With 13 HCPs but no five-card major, you would open the longer minor, 1♦.

“What if East is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♣? What does South call? (Pass.) When the opponents open the bidding in a suit, there are two competitive actions you can take: a takeout double or an overcall. If your hand isn’t suitable for one of these actions, the only option left is to pass.

“Is this hand suitable for a takeout double? (No.) You don’t have support for one of the unbid suits, spades. You should have at least three-card support for an unbid major and, preferably, four-card support. You can sometimes get away without support for an unbid suit, but only if you have enough extra strength to compensate. You have only 13 HCPs, so you aren’t strong enough to offset the lack of spade support.

“**Is this hand suitable for an overcall?** (No.) You generally need a good five-card suit or longer to make an overcall. This is to counteract the danger of coming into the auction once the opponents have opened the bidding. With only a four-card suit, the risk of being doubled for penalty increases. Neither the heart suit nor the diamond suit is suitable for an overcall. Besides, you don’t particularly want to suggest an opening lead to partner. With something in all four suits, you should be happy to let partner choose what to lead.”

If any of the students suggest overcalling 1NT, you can point out that a direct 1NT overcall shows the same values as an opening bid of 1NT, perhaps a little stronger — 15 to 18 HCP. Partner will make a call based on that assumption.

“Passing doesn’t end the auction. You may get a chance to bid later. If you do act later, partner will have the inference that your hand was unsuitable for an immediate overcall or takeout double. When the opponents open the bidding, you don’t have to bid just because you hold 13 or more points.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In clubs: take away the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1 ♣	1 ♥

SOUTH
 ♠ K x
 ♥ Q J 10 x x
 ♦ K x x x
 ♣ x x

“**If you, South, were the dealer, would you open the bidding?** (No.) There are only 9 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit. Partner would expect you to hold more if you opened the bidding in first or second position. As dealer, you would pass with this hand.

“**Suppose East deals and opens the bidding 1 ♣. What call does South make?** (1 ♥/Pass.) An overcall doesn’t promise the values for an opening bid. Overcalling is a matter of judgment. You have to weigh the risk of getting your side into trouble against the potential gain from competing for the contract.

“You only have a moderate heart suit, but it would still be reasonable to suggest it as a trump suit, and you would like partner to lead a heart with no better choice. Overcalling might also prevent the opponents from having a smooth auction.

“Most players would overcall 1 ♥ with this hand if not vulnerable. If your side is vulnerable, the risk of overcalling is greater, but the majority of players would still elect to overcall with this hand. With a low heart in place of the ♥10, you might choose to pass rather than overcall. That’s how close the decision is.

“Suppose East opens 1♠ instead of 1♣. Would South overcall? (No.)

Now you would have to introduce your suit at the two level. That is a lot more dangerous and increases the chance of being doubled. Most players would not overcall with this hand, even when non vulnerable. If vulnerable, most players wouldn’t even consider overcalling.

“As a general guideline:

- You need a good suit and about 8 or more HCPs to make a simple overcall at the one level.
- You need a very good suit and at least the values for an opening bid to make a simple overcall at the two level.
- With a borderline decision, check the vulnerability. You can afford to be more aggressive when non vulnerable, especially if the opponents are vulnerable.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away two low cards and add the ace.

“In clubs: add a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥	♠ K x
				♥ A Q J 10
				♦ K x x x
				♣ x x x

“Suppose East opens 1♦. What call does South make? (1♥.) An overcall generally shows a five-card suit or longer. Here, however, the hearts are strong enough to be treated as a five-card suit. You would certainly prefer a heart lead to something else. You are only at the one level. It’s unlikely anything too bad will happen. Partner will expect you to have five or more hearts, but you can always say you had one of your diamonds mixed in with your hearts!

“Your only other option is to pass. You don’t want to make a takeout double of 1♦ without support for spades and with weak support for clubs.

“Suppose East opens 1♠ instead of 1♦. Now what call does South make? (Double.) Now a takeout double would be your best option. You don’t want to overcall a four-card suit at the two level. You have four-card support for hearts and diamonds, and you also have some support for clubs if partner chooses that suit.

“Change the South hand.

“In clubs: take away a low card and add the king.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1NT

SOUTH
 ♠ K x
 ♥ A Q J 10
 ♦ K x x x
 ♣ K x x

“**What call would South make if East opened 1♦?** (1NT.) An overcall of 1NT shows at least the same strength as an opening 1NT bid. Since the opponents have opened the bidding, it is preferable if the hand is a little stronger — to reduce the risk of being doubled for penalty. Most partnerships use a range of a very good 15 HCP — with lots of 10’s and 9’s — to 18 HCP. You should also have some strength in the opponent’s suit, since that suit is the one most likely to be led. You could overcall 1NT if East opened 1♣, 1♦ or 1♥.

“**What would you call if East opened 1♠?** (Double/1NT.) You have a choice of actions. You could still overcall 1NT, which would describe your shape and strength. You could make a takeout double, putting the emphasis on your support for the unbid suits. You might be persuaded to make a takeout double due to the fact that East probably has at least a five-card spade suit, which West is likely to lead.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: add the king.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	Double

SOUTH
 ♠ K x
 ♥ A K Q J 10
 ♦ K x x x
 ♣ K x

“**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♣. What call does South make?** (Double.) You could overcall 1♥, but as you saw earlier, a one-level overcall could be made on as few as 8 points. If you have too wide a range for your simple overcalls, partner will never know whether to bid or pass.

“Some partnerships resolve this issue by using a jump overcall — jumping to 2♥ over 1♣ — to show a hand too strong for a simple overcall. As will be discussed later, that isn’t the most popular style today. Even if the partnership does play strong jump overcalls, a jump to 2♥ would tend to show a six-card or longer suit.

“The common solution to this challenge is to start with a takeout double. A takeout double is supposed to show support for all of the unbid suits. You can make an exception, however, when you are strong enough to bid again, if partner bids a suit for which you don’t have support.

“Start with a double of 1♣. If partner bids 1♠, you can now bid 2♥. Doubling and then bidding your suit shows a hand too strong for a simple overcall — 18 or more total points. Partner still could pass with a very weak hand, but should feel confident about bidding with some help.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away the king.

“In clubs: add the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	Double

SOUTH
 ♠ K x
 ♥ A Q J 10
 ♦ K x x x
 ♣ A K x

“**What would South call if East opened 1♣?** (Double.) With 20 HCPs, you are too strong to overcall 1NT. While some partnerships might use a jump overcall to 2NT to show this type of hand, that isn’t the common practice. Instead, start with a takeout double, even though you don’t have support for spades.

“**Suppose North responds 1♠ and the auction comes back to South. Now what call does South make?** (1NT.) By bidding 1NT at this point, you are showing a balanced hand too strong to overcall 1NT — 19 to 21 points. You don’t have to bid any more to send this message. Don’t forget, the more you have, the less partner is likely to have — especially when the opponents have opened the bidding.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the king and add a low card.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

“In clubs: take away the ace and the king and add two low cards.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥

SOUTH
 ♠ x x
 ♥ A Q J 10 x
 ♦ K x x
 ♣ x x x

“**What would South call if East opened 1♣?** (1♥.) Now we are back to a typical simple overcall at the one level.”

Summary

“Here are the simple rules for overcalls:

- A simple overcall tends to show a good five-card suit or longer and 8 to 16 HCP (10 to 17 total points).
- With a borderline hand, keep an eye on the vulnerability.
- At the two level or higher, the overcall generally shows at least the equivalent of an opening bid.
- With 15 to 18 HCP, a balanced hand, and some strength in the opponent’s suit, start with an overcall of 1NT.
- With 18 or more total points — a hand too strong for a simple overcall — start with a takeout double. You can describe your hand on your rebid by bidding a new suit or notrump.”

➔ “Let’s do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise One — Simple Overcall in a Suit

East–West are non-vulnerable. What would East call with the following hands in the given auction? Would East make the same call if East–West were vulnerable?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	?	
1) ♠ A K J 9 2 ♥ 7 3 ♦ 10 8 4 ♣ K 8 2	2) ♠ Q 8 ♥ A 8 2 ♦ Q 7 3 ♣ Q J 7 6 3	3) ♠ 7 2 ♥ K J 9 8 2 ♦ K 10 5 ♣ J 7 3	
4) ♠ 10 3 ♥ A K J 10 ♦ K 8 6 2 ♣ 10 6 5	5) ♠ A K 3 ♥ A K Q 9 2 ♦ 7 4 ♣ K 8 4	6) ♠ K Q 9 7 3 ♥ 5 ♦ 3 ♣ A Q J 9 7 5	

Exercise One Answer — Simple Overcall in a Suit

- 1) Non-vul: 1♠. East has a good five-card suit and enough strength to make a one-level overcall.
 Vul: 1♠. Although East might not open the bidding with this hand, it's worth a one-level overcall even if East–West are vulnerable.
- 2) Non-vul: Pass. The club suit isn't good enough to risk a two-level overcall.
 Vul: Pass. If the club suit is not good enough to overcall non-vulnerable, overcalling would be even riskier when vulnerable.
- 3) Non-vul: 1♥ or Pass. This is the minimum for a one-level overcall. The suit is reasonable and so East might risk entering the auction. If West would expect a better hand, it may be safer to pass.
 Vul: Pass. The stakes increase when vulnerable. To overcall with this hand, even at the one level, would be extremely risky.
- 4) Non-vul: 1♥. This four-card suit feels like a five-card suit, so it's reasonable to overcall with this hand. East wants West to lead a heart if they defend.
 Vul: 1♥. With a good suit, the risk of being doubled decreases. The ♦K figures to be favorably placed to take a trick, so it's worth risking an overcall on this hand when vulnerable.
- 5) Non-vul: Double. This hand is too strong for a one-level overcall. East starts with a takeout double, planning to bid hearts next. This series of calls shows a hand too strong for a simple overcall.
 Vul: Double. The vulnerability isn't a factor with a hand like this.
- 6) Non-vul: 2♣. East starts with the longer suit and plans to bid, and perhaps rebid, the spades at the next opportunity. West will know that the clubs are longer than the spades and can select the best trump suit accordingly.
 Vul: 2♣. The vulnerability has no effect on the choice of calls with this hand.

Advancing After a Simple Overcall

Introduction

“To distinguish the partner of the overcaller from the partner of the opening bidder, the overcaller’s partner will be called the advancer. An opening bid typically covers a range of about 13 to 21 points. A simple overcall covers a range of about 8 to 17 total points. As a result, you can’t treat an overcall in exactly the same fashion as an opening bid. The advancer needs slightly different methods than the responder.”

Instructions

“Leave the South hand as it is and construct a hand in front of the North player.

“In spades: the king, the queen and two low cards.

“In hearts: three low cards.

“In diamonds: the queen and a low card.

“In clubs: the jack and three low cards.

NORTH ♠ K Q x x ♥ x x x ♦ Q x ♣ J x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1 ♣</td> <td>1 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH			1 ♣	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass				SOUTH ♠ x x ♥ A Q J 10 x ♦ K x x ♣ x x x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH															
		1 ♣	1 ♥															
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	Pass															
Pass																		

“**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♣. What call would South make?** (1♥.) With a good five-card suit, South makes a simple overcall at the one level.

“**South overcalls 1♥ and West passes. What call does North, the advancer, make?** (2♥.) With three-card support for the overcalled suit and 8 HCPs, North raises.

“**Since South only made a simple overcall and game is unlikely, why would North bother raising?** (To compete.) Although game is unlikely, the advancer should still raise with support and some values. The objective is not so much to reach game (although that will occasionally happen when the overcaller has a very good hand and a good fit is found) but to further the competition. If North passes, it will be easier for East–West to continue bidding and perhaps find their best spot. North’s raise is an attempt to buy the contract if the hand belongs to North–South or to prevent East–West from buying the contract cheaply if the deal belongs to the opponents.

“There is no need for the advancer to stretch to respond with a minimum hand of about 6 or 7 points. You usually respond with as few as 6 points when partner opens the bidding in a suit, since opener’s upper limit is 20 or 21 points. Because the overcall is limited to 16 or 17 points and could be made on as few as 8 or 9 points, a simple raise tends to show 8 or 9 points instead of 6 to 9 points.

“Like the overcall, responding is a judgment call. If your side is vulnerable, partner is likely to have a good suit and a good hand to venture into the bidding, so you might want to raise with a fit and as few as 6 or 7 points.

“**What would South call if North raises to 2♥ and East passes?** (Pass.) With nothing much extra for the overcall, South would stop in 2♥.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: take away a low card and add the king.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ K Q x x</p> <p>♥ K x x</p> <p>♦ Q x</p> <p>♣ J x x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</th> <th style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	2♣	1♣	1♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ x x</p> <p>♥ A Q J 10 x</p> <p>♦ K x x</p> <p>♣ x x x</p>
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH															
Pass	2♣	1♣	1♥															
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♥															
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass															

“**East opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♥.) South overcalls 1♥.

“**West passes. What call does North make?** (2♣.) With 11 HCPs plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton diamond, North would have enough to invite game opposite an opening bid. There are two disadvantages, however, to getting the partnership to 3♥ opposite an overcall:

- If the overcall was based on minimum values, the partnership might get too high.
- Without a specific partnership agreement to the contrary, a new suit by the advancer is not forcing. If North were to bid 1♠, intending to show heart support later, South might pass, and the heart fit would be missed.

“On the plus side, the opponent’s opening bid has made one call available as a forcing call: a cuebid of the opponent’s suit. The cuebid is forcing and shows interest in reaching game. The cuebid can cover a wide variety of hands for advancer, but one possibility is three-card or longer support for the overcaller’s suit and game invitational values. Let’s see how it works.

“**If North cuebids 2♣ in response to the 1♥ overcall and East passes, what call does South make?** (2♥.) With a minimum for the overcall — less than an opening bid — South can simply rebid the overcalled suit at the cheapest available level.

“**After South rebids 2♥, what call does North make?** (Pass.) Having shown interest in reaching game, North can pass when South shows nothing extra.

“Looking at the combined hands, how many tricks are North–South likely to take in 2♥? (Eight.) South has one spade loser, two diamond losers and three club losers. A diamond loser can be ruffed in the North hand, so North–South should make exactly 2♥. The cuebid allowed North to show game interest without getting the partnership too high.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the queen and add the ace.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ A K x x			1♣	1♥	♠ x x
♥ K x x	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥	♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ Q x	Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass	♦ K x x
♣ J x x x	Pass				♣ x x x

“Now North has an opening bid. East, however, is the dealer and opens 1♣. South overcalls 1♥, and West passes.

“What is North’s first call? (2♣.) With an opening bid and support for partner’s suit, North starts with a cuebid.

“If East passes, what does South rebid? (2♥.) South shows a minimum overcall by rebidding 2♥.

“After West passes, what does North call next? (3♥/Pass.) North could give up on game and pass at this point but, with an opening bid, can make one more try by raising to 3♥.

“If North does raise to 3♥, what call will South make? (Pass.) South has a borderline decision but will likely pass the invitation. Nine tricks is the limit.

“Suppose the auction begins the same way. East opens 1♣, South overcalls 1♥, West passes and North cuebids 2♣. East now bids 3♣. What call does South make? (Pass.) East’s bid has relieved South of the obligation to bid in response to the cuebid. With a minimum overcall, South can pass. When the bidding comes back to North, North can still bid 3♥ to show support. South can pass, and the partnership still reaches its best spot.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king and add the jack.

“Change the South hand.

“In diamonds: add the ace.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ A J x x</p> <p>♥ K x x</p> <p>♦ Q x</p> <p>♣ J x x x</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>WEST</th> <th>NORTH</th> <th>EAST</th> <th>SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1 ♣</td> <td>1 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH			1 ♣	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass		<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ x x</p> <p>♥ A Q J 10 x</p> <p>♦ A K x x</p> <p>♣ x x</p>
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH																			
		1 ♣	1 ♥																			
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦																			
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥																			
Pass	Pass	Pass																				

“**East opens 1♣. What does South bid?** (1♥.) An overcall of 1♥ is the best descriptive bid for South.

“**West passes. What call does North make?** (2♣.) With interest in reaching a game, North starts with a cuebid of 2♣.

“**East passes. What call does South make?** (2♦.) South can’t be sure exactly what North has in mind but, with more than a minimum overcall, can now show the second suit, 2♦. When the advancer cuebids, only a minimum rebid in the overcaller’s original suit can be passed.

“**After West passes, what does North call over South’s 2♦ bid?** (2♥.) North can show heart support. North has already shown at least game interest, so there’s no need to jump.

“**After hearing North’s bid, what call does South make?** (4♥.) With a good hand for the overcall and partner showing interest in reaching game along with some heart support, South can take the partnership right to game. North–South should be able to make 4♥, losing only one spade and two club tricks. The diamond loser can be ruffed in dummy.

“**Suppose East opened 1♠ instead of 1♣. What call would South make?** (2♥.) South has a good enough suit and a strong enough hand to make an overcall at the two level.

“**If West passed, what call would North make?** (2♠.) With support for partner’s overcalled suit and interest in reaching game, North can start with a cuebid of 2♠. A raise to 3♥ would show only 8 or 9 points.

“**If East passed, what call would South make?** (3♦.) With more than a minimum overcall, South can introduce the second suit.

“**After West passes, what call does North make?** (3♥.) Having started with a cuebid, North now can show the heart support.

“**After East passes, what call does South make?** (4♥.) Now that South knows partner has game interest and heart support, South can bid game.

- “Change the North hand.
 “In spades: take away a low card.
 “In hearts: add a low card.
 “Change the South hand.
 “In spades: add a low card.
 “In diamonds: take away the ace.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2♥</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	2♣	1♣	1♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	2♥	SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
Pass	2♣	1♣	1♥											
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♥											
♠ A J x		♠ x x x												
♥ K x x x		♥ A Q J 10 x												
♦ Q x		♦ K x x												
♣ J x x x		♣ x x												

“East opens the bidding 1♣, South overcalls 1♥ and West passes. What call does North make? (2♣.) The cuebid can be used with three-card support or four-card or longer support. With game interest, North starts with 2♣.”

Some partnerships use a jump cuebid — to 3♣ — to show four-card support and the strength for a limit raise, but this is a conventional approach that requires partnership agreement.

“After East passes, what call does South make? (2♥.) With a minimum overcall, South simply rebids 2♥.

“What call does North make after West passes? (Pass.) North has expressed some interest in game but received no encouragement from South. North can pass and leave the partnership in a safe partscore.

“How will North–South fare in 2♥? (Eight tricks.) South will likely lose two spade tricks, one diamond trick and two club tricks — making exactly 2♥. If North had jumped to 3♥, the partnership would be too high.”

Note: In a competitive auction, there would be nothing wrong with getting to 3♥. East–West can probably make nine tricks in diamonds. Some partnerships might use the jump cuebid to 3♣ to conventionally show North’s hand — but that isn’t standard practice.

“With the cuebid available to show a fit and interest in reaching game, the advancer doesn’t need to jump to the three level to show a limit raise with four-card support. That frees up the jump raise for other purposes.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the ace.

“In diamonds: take away the queen and add a low card.

“In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♥</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	3♥	1♣	1♥	SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH							
Pass	3♥	1♣	1♥							
♠ J x				♠ x x x						
♥ K x x x				♥ A Q J 10 x						
♦ x x				♦ K x x						
♣ J x x x x				♣ x x						

“**East opens 1♣, and South overcalls 1♥. If West passes, what call does North make?** (3♥/2♥/Pass.) With only 5 HCPs, game is very unlikely, so North might consider passing. North also might consider raising to 2♥ to show support. A better choice, however, is an immediate jump to 3♥. Since North could cuebid 2♣ with game interest, a jump raise by the advancer is weak and preemptive, not a limit raise. It shows four-card or longer support and a weak hand.

“**Can North–South make 3♥?** (No.) South has two spade losers, three diamond losers and two club losers. Even if East holds the ♦ A and South ruffs both a diamond and a spade loser in dummy, 3♥ will still be defeated.

“**What would be the purpose of North’s jump to 3♥?** (Preemptive.) The jump to 3♥ will make it much more difficult for East–West to find their best spot. Even if East–West do find their best contract, South may be able to make a profitable sacrifice, knowing about North’s weakness and support for hearts.

“**Without interference from North–South, what contract might East–West reach?** (4♠.) East–West have an eight-card spade fit and a minimum of 25 points. 15 HCPs are missing and East–West might have some distributional values. East–West should be able to take at least 10 tricks in spades — perhaps even make a slam!”

If the students doubt this, have them randomly deal the East–West cards and see how East–West would fare in a spade contract.

“**Suppose East opens 1♣, South overcalls 1♥ and West bids 1♠. What call should North make?** (3♥.) Again, a preemptive jump raise of partner’s overcall is a bid that will make it difficult for East–West to judge whether they belong in partscore, game or slam — or, perhaps, defending against a heart contract.

“**How would South know that North’s jump to 3♥ is weak and preemptive, not invitational?** (North didn’t cuebid.) With interest in reaching a game contract, North would start with a cuebid. In this auction, North would have a choice of cuebidding 2♣ or 2♠. If West had bid 2♣ instead of 1♠, North could cuebid 3♣ to show interest in getting to game.

“Change the North hand.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

NORTH ♠ J x ♥ K x x x x ♦ x ♣ J x x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4 ♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♣</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♥</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	4 ♥	1 ♣	1 ♥	SOUTH ♠ x x x ♥ A Q J 10 x ♦ K x x ♣ x x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH							
1 ♠	4 ♥	1 ♣	1 ♥							

“**Suppose East opens 1 ♣, South overcalls 1 ♥ and West bids 1 ♠. What call does North make?** (4 ♥/3 ♥.) North could make a preemptive jump to 3 ♥, but with five-card support, the standard tactic is to make a preemptive jump all the way to game, 4 ♥. This takes a level of bidding away from the opponents.

“North’s action might be tempered by the vulnerability. When vulnerable against non vulnerable opponents, North might take a more cautious action of raising to only 2 ♥ or 3 ♥. When non vulnerable, North should probably go all out, especially if East–West are vulnerable. Any penalty North–South suffer is likely to be less than the value of the opponent’s contract.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: Add the king, the queen and a low card.

“In hearts: take away the king and two low cards.

“In diamonds: add a low card.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH ♠ K Q J x x ♥ x x ♦ x x ♣ J x x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♦</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass/2 ♠</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	1 ♠	1 ♦	1 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass/2 ♠	SOUTH ♠ x x x ♥ A Q J 10 x ♦ K x x ♣ x x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
Pass	1 ♠	1 ♦	1 ♥											
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass/2 ♠											

“**Suppose East opens the bidding 1 ♦. What call does South make?** (1 ♥.) South wants to get into the auction and show a good five-card heart suit.

“**If West passes, what call does North make?** (1 ♠.) Without support for partner’s suit, the advancer has a number of choices. North can simply pass. The overcall isn’t forcing and has an upper limit of about 17 points. Even with 8 or 9 points, the advancer could pass rather than look for a better spot. The advancer also can suggest another suit as trump. A new suit by the advancer is not forcing unless the partnership has an agreement to the contrary. Since the overcaller is showing a good five-card suit or longer, the advancer should have a good five-card or longer suit to suggest that suit as trump.

“The advancer could bid 1♠ instead of passing. The advancer would certainly prefer spades to hearts as the trump suit.

“**If North does bid 1♠ and East passes, what call does South make?** (Pass/2♠.) Since the advancer’s new suit bid isn’t forcing, South can pass with a minimum overcall. South has quite a good hand for spades and could raise to 2♠. If East bids, South should definitely raise to 2♠ to compete for the contract.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the queen and a low card.

“In clubs: add the ace and the king.

NORTH	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	3♣	1♦	1♥	Pass		Pass	Pass	SOUTH
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Pass	3♣	1♦	1♥											
Pass		Pass	Pass											
♠ K J x		♠ x x x												
♥ x x		♥ A Q J 10 x												
♦ x x		♦ K x x												
♣ A K J x x x		♣ x x												

“**East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥ and West passes. What call does North make?** (3♣.) North has an opening bid without support for partner’s suit. North could bid 2♣, but that isn’t very encouraging. A jump in a new suit by the advancer is invitational, showing a good six-card or longer suit and 11 to 13 points. North jumps to 3♣, leaving the next decision to South.

“**If North does jump to 3♣ and East passes, what call will South make?** (Pass.) With less than an opening bid for the overcall, South should probably pass, declining the invitation.

“Change the South hand.

“In clubs: take away a low card and add the queen.

NORTH	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">3NT</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	3♣	1♦	1♥	Pass		Pass	3NT	SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
Pass	3♣	1♦	1♥											
Pass		Pass	3NT											
♠ K J x		♠ x x x												
♥ x x		♥ A Q J 10 x												
♦ x x		♦ K x x												
♣ A K J x x x		♣ Q x												

“**The auction starts the same way: 1♦ by East, 1♥ by South, pass by West and 3♣ by North. What call does South make if East passes?** (3NT/3♦.) Holding an opening bid, South can accept North’s invitation, perhaps by bidding 3NT. South does show strength in diamonds. 3NT is a reasonable contract for North–South. It might require a little luck, such as a successful heart finesse.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add the ace and a low card.

“In clubs: take away two low cards.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away the queen and add a low card.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ A K J x x	Pass	2♦	1♦	1♥	♠ x x x
♥ x x	Pass	2♠	Pass	2♥	♥ A J 10 x x
♦ x x	Pass	4♠	Pass	3♠	♦ K x x
♣ A K J x	Pass		Pass	Pass	♣ Q x

“**East opens 1♦. What call does South make?** (1♥.) South has enough strength and a good enough suit to overcall 1♥.

“**West passes the 1♥ overcall. What call does North make?** (2♦.) North has a strong enough hand to want to be in game, even if South has a minimum overcall. Unfortunately, a new suit bid of 1♠ would not be forcing. Even a jump to 2♠ would be invitational. Instead, North must start with a cuebid of 2♦. That’s not so bad. It shows interest in reaching game and doesn’t necessarily show support for hearts.

“**East passes. What call does South make?** (2♥.) With nothing extra for the overcall, South can simply rebid the heart suit. Initially, South assumes partner’s cuebid is showing a good hand with support for hearts.

“**West passes. What call does North make?** (2♠.) Now North can show the real purpose of the cuebid — to show a strong hand with five or more spades. The 2♠ bid is forcing, since North could have bid 1♠ or jumped to 2♠ over the 1♥ overcall, if North wanted to make a non-forcing call.

“**After East passes, what call does South make?** (3♠.) Since North is showing at least a five-card spade suit, South raises to show support.

“**After West passes, what call does North make?** (4♠.) Having found a suitable fit, North can settle for game. South has not shown much more than a minimum overcall, so slam is unlikely. The partnership reaches a good game contract.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away the king and a low card.

“In diamonds: add the queen and a low card.

“In clubs: take away the ace and the jack and add two low cards.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	1NT	1♣	1♥	Pass		Pass	Pass	SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
Pass	1NT	1♣	1♥											
Pass		Pass	Pass											
♠ A J x		♠ x x x												
♥ x x		♥ A J 10 x x												
♦ Q x x x		♦ K x x												
♣ K x x x		♣ Q x												

“**East opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♥.) The hand is worth a one-level overcall.

“**West passes. What call does North make?** (1NT.) North has 10 HCPs, but doesn’t have three-card support for hearts. A new suit bid would not be forcing, so North’s best choice is 1NT. A bid of 1NT by the advancer is slightly stronger than a 1NT response to an opening bid, because the overcaller could have a weaker hand. The usual range is 8 to 11 points, rather than 6 to 10.

“**East passes. What call does South make?** (Pass.) Since North hasn’t shown support for hearts and South doesn’t have much extra for the overcall, South should pass. 1NT is the best spot on the combined hands.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card and add the queen.

“In diamonds: take away a low card and add the jack.

“Change the South hand.

“In clubs: take away the queen and add a low card.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">WEST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">NORTH</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">EAST</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">2NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	Pass	2NT	1♣	1♥	Pass		Pass	Pass	SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
Pass	2NT	1♣	1♥											
Pass		Pass	Pass											
♠ A Q J		♠ x x x												
♥ x x		♥ A J 10 x x												
♦ Q J x x		♦ K x x												
♣ K x x x		♣ x x												

“East opens 1♣. Would South overcall? (Maybe.) The decision is borderline, but many players would overcall 1♥, especially if non vulnerable.

“Assuming South overcalls 1♥ and West passes, what call does North make? North has an opening bid, but there is no guarantee of game opposite a simple overcall. A new suit would not be forcing. North’s best choice is probably a jump to 2NT. A bid of 2NT by the advancer is not forcing and shows 12 to 15 points. With a stronger hand, North could start with a cuebid and then bid notrump.

“If North bids 2NT and East passes, what call does South make? (Pass.) The partnership is likely to be high enough — if not too high. With no better contract to suggest, South can pass.”

Summary

“With support for partner’s overcalled suit, the advancer can:

- Make a single raise of a one-level overcall with three-card or longer support and 8 or 9 points.
- Make a single raise of a two-level overcall with 8 or 9 points.
- Make a preemptive jump raise with four-card support and a weak hand, 5 to 8 points.
- Jump to game, either with the intention of making the contract or as a weak preemptive bid with five-card or longer support.
- Start with a cuebid of the opponent’s suit with 9 or more points and four-card support or 10 or more points and three-card support.
 - The advancer’s cuebid is forcing for one round and shows interest in reaching game, if partner has more than a minimum overcall.
 - If the overcaller makes a minimum rebid of the overcalled suit, the advancer can pass with 9 to 11 points, raise with 12 to 14 points and bid game or cuebid again with 15 or more points.

“Without support for the overcalled suit, the advancer can:

- Make a non-forcing bid in a new five-card or longer suit.
- Make an invitational jump in a good six-card or longer suit with 11 to 13 points.
- Bid 1NT with 8 to 11 points and some strength in the opponent’s suit.
- Bid 2NT with 12 to 15 points and some strength in the opponent’s suit.
- Bid 3NT with 16 or more points and some strength in the opponent’s suit.
- Cuebid the opponent’s suit and then bid a new suit to make a forcing bid.

“If partner overcalls at the two level, the advancer can be a little more aggressive, since the overcaller should have a hand worth at least an opening bid.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Two — Advancing After a Simple Overcall

What would West call with each of the following hands after this auction?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
?	1 ♣	1 ♥	Pass
1) ♠ 6 3 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ K 9 8 5 3 ♣ A 8 3		2) ♠ 7 2 ♥ K 9 7 3 ♦ Q 10 7 6 2 ♣ 9 5	3) ♠ K 10 ♥ K J 8 ♦ A 8 7 5 ♣ 10 8 3 2
4) ♠ K Q 10 8 5 ♥ 6 2 ♦ A 8 7 3 ♣ 8 7		5) ♠ Q 3 2 ♥ A 8 ♦ A K Q 7 5 ♣ 6 5 4	6) ♠ Q 8 4 ♥ J 6 ♦ A J 10 3 ♣ K Q 10 3

Exercise Two Answer — Advancing After a Simple Overcall

- 1) 2♥. East could have a very good hand for the overcall. Raising keeps alive the possibility of reaching game. If East has a minimum hand for the overcall, East–West may not make 2♥, but West’s raise might make it more difficult for the opponents to find their best spot.
- 2) 3♥. A jump raise of East’s overcall is weak and preemptive, showing four-card support and a weak hand. With a limit raise or better, West would start by cuebidding 2♣, the opponent’s suit.
- 3) 2♣. The cuebid of North’s suit followed by a raise of East’s suit shows the strength for a limit raise. The hand is too strong to raise to 2♥, and an immediate jump to 3♥ would show a weak hand. East might pass a new-suit bid, and East–West would miss the heart fit.
- 4) 1♠. Without enough support to raise East right away, West bids a new (good) suit. This bid is not forcing, and East can pass with a minimum overcall. If East has a good hand, however, the partnership can find its best spot.
- 5) 2♣. Playing standard methods, a response of 2♦ would not be forcing. West starts with a cuebid, planning to show the diamond suit at the next opportunity. This style can be awkward on a hand like this one. Some partnerships prefer to treat a new suit response to an overcall as a forcing bid, which would work better on this hand.
- 6) 2NT. West shows a balanced hand with 12 to 15 points and strength in North’s suit. It isn’t forcing in response to an overcall. East can pass with a minimum overcall. With a hand worth an opening bid or better, East can bid game.

Rebids by the Overcaller

Introduction

“Most of the advancer’s bids are non forcing — raises, a new suit, a jump in a new suit, notrump bids — so the overcaller doesn’t need to bid again except with additional strength or distribution. The only forcing bid the advancer can make is a cuebid of the opponent’s suit.”

Instructions

“Remove the North hand and leave the South hand as it is.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1 ♦	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
 ♠ x x x
 ♥ A J 10 x x
 ♦ K x x
 ♣ x x

“North–South are non vulnerable. If East opens 1 ♦, what call does South make? (1 ♥.) A decent five-card heart suit and 8 high-card points is enough to overcall at the one level.

“West passes, North bids 2 ♣ and East passes. What is South’s rebid? (Pass.) The advancer’s new suit response is not forcing. With a minimum overcall, pass and hope to make a small partscore. There’s no need to rebid the hearts. You’ve already shown a five-card suit with the overcall. Partner could have raised immediately with three-card or longer support, or partner could have started with a cuebid of 2 ♦. Partner probably has only one or two hearts, but should have a good five- or six-card club suit. Partner could have passed 1 ♥ with a poor five-card club suit and no fit.

“Suppose East opens 1 ♦, South overcalls 1 ♥, West passes, North bids 3 ♣ and East passes. What call does South make? (Pass.) The advancer’s jump in a new suit is invitational. With a minimum, pass and hope for the best.

“Suppose you overcall East’s 1 ♦ opening with 1 ♥, West passes and North responds 2NT. What call does South make after East passes? (Pass.) The advancer’s jump to 2NT is invitational, showing 12 to 15 points. The partnership is high enough already.

“Suppose you overcall East’s 1 ♦ opening with 1 ♥, West passes and North jumps to 3 ♥. East bids 3 ♠. What call does South make? (Pass.) The advancer’s jump raise is weak and preemptive, showing four-card support and not much else. Your side has already done enough to interfere with the opponents’ auction. The opponents may misjudge the situation and bid too much or too little — or get to the wrong strain.

“Suppose East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥, West passes and North bids 2♦. What does South do after East passes? (2♥.) The advancer’s cuebid is forcing, and you must make a call if East passes. With a minimum overcall, simply rebid your suit.

“What if South rebids 2♥, West passes and North raises to 3♥? What does South call after East passes? (Pass.) Partner is showing a very good hand in support of hearts — at least the values for an opening bid. The cuebid followed by a raise, however, is only invitational. With nothing extra, the partnership is probably high enough.

“Suppose East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥, West passes, North cuebids 2♦ and East says double? What call does South make? (Pass.) East’s double of partner’s overcall relieves you from the obligation of making a bid. You can pass to show a minimum overcall. The advancer won’t leave the partnership in 2♦ doubled. Most likely, partner will return to 2♥, unless partner has something extra for the cuebid.”

Some partnerships would play that a rebid of 2♥ by the overcaller would not promise any extra values. While this is a reasonable agreement, standard practice is to use the pass to show a minimum.

“Suppose East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥, West passes and North cuebids 2♦. East passes, and South rebids 2♥ to show a minimum overcall. West passes, North bids 2♠ and East passes. What call does South make? (Bid 3♠.) The advancer’s cuebid followed by a new-suit bid is forcing. The advancer has no other way to show a very strong hand with spades. If the advancer had bid 1♠ after your overcall, it would not be forcing. Even a jump to 2♠ in response to the overcall would only be invitational. So, despite your minimum, you have to say something. Since partner will have at least a five-card spade suit, you can show support by raising to the three level — leaving the next decision to North.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In diamonds: add the queen.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥	♠ x x
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	♥ A J 10 x x
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass	♦ K Q x x
Pass				♣ x x

“East opens the bidding 1♣. What call does South make? (1♥.) An overcall of 1♥ is still the best description of the hand.

“West passes, North cuebids 2♣ and East passes. What call does South make? (2♦.) Although you don’t have much extra for the overcall, there’s no harm in showing your second suit. It might help partner decide whether it is worth trying for a game contract. It’s also possible that partner has a good hand without a fit for hearts, in which case diamonds might be the best trump suit for your side.

“West passes, North bids 2♥ and East passes. What call does South make? (Pass.) You’ve already described the hand nicely, and partner’s preference back to hearts is not forcing. You’ve both had your say, and partscore in hearts sounds like the limit of the hand.

“Change the South hand.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

“In clubs: add the king.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT

SOUTH
 ♠ x x
 ♥ A J 10 x x
 ♦ K Q x
 ♣ K x x

“East opens 1♦. What call does South make? (1♥.) This hand has the values for an opening bid, but is still best described by starting with a one-level overcall in hearts.

“West passes, North cuebids 2♦ and East passes. What call does South make? (2NT.) With a good hand for the overcall, you don’t want to make a minimum rebid of 2♥, because the advancer might pass. With some strength in East’s suit, you can describe the hand by rebidding 2NT, suggesting notrump as a possible contract.

“Suppose North bids 3♥ after your 2NT rebid? What does South call after East passes? (Pass/4♥/3NT.) Tough decision. You’ve shown a sound overcall with the 2NT rebid, but the advancer hasn’t bid game in notrump or hearts. It sounds as though partner has support for hearts but only invitational values — 10 or 11 points. The conservative action would be to pass. The more aggressive action would be to bid game in hearts or, perhaps, notrump — if you’re willing to take a chance on spades.”

Depending on the experience level of the students, you may want to elaborate on this last point:

“The vulnerability and form of scoring might affect your decision. Most partnerships tend to bid more aggressively in this situation when vulnerable and playing in a team format, or at rubber bridge. Non vulnerable, or playing in a matchpoint pairs event, it is usually best to take the more conservative approach to make certain of getting a plus score.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: add the king.

“In diamonds: take away the king.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♥

SOUTH
 ♠ x x
 ♥ A K J 10 x x
 ♦ Q x
 ♣ K x x

“East opens 1 ♦. What call does South make? (1 ♥.) Unless the partnership uses intermediate jump overcalls (a subject which will be discussed shortly), you would start with a simple overcall of 1 ♥. The one-level overcall covers a wide range of hands.

“West passes and North responds 2 ♦. East passes. What call does South make? (3 ♥.) Since you have more than a minimum overcall, you don’t want to rebid 2 ♥. Since that would show a minimum, the advancer might pass. To show a very good overcall, you can jump to 3 ♥, leaving the final decision to North.

“Suppose that East opens the bidding 1 ♠. What would South call? (2 ♥.) A simple overcall will suffice, but it has to be at the two level over the 1 ♠ opening bid.

“West passes and North bids 2 ♠. East passes. What call does South make? (4 ♥/3 ♥.) It’s a judgment call. If you feel you have a better than average hand for your overcall, you should jump to 4 ♥. If you feel that this is fairly minimal for a two-level overcall, you may rebid 3 ♥ and leave the final call to North. All you know is that North has enough to be interested in reaching game after your overcall.”

Summary

“After you have made a simple overcall, most of the advancer’s bids are non forcing, including a new suit, a jump in a new suit and notrump bids. You do not need to bid again, unless you have more than a minimum or extra distribution. When the advancer makes a cuebid, however, you have to bid again, unless the player on your right bids:

- With a minimum for the overcall, simply rebid your suit at the cheapest available level or show a second suit that is lower-ranking than your first suit.
- With more than a minimum, show the extra values by rebidding in notrump or jumping in your own suit. A rebid in a new suit doesn’t promise any extra values but is forcing for one round, so you will have an opportunity to show the extra strength later.”

Note: Local practices vary in this area. Try to teach your students to use the partnership agreements they will encounter when playing in local club games.

Jump Overcalls in a Suit

Introduction

“An overcall, one level higher than necessary, is a jump overcall. This bid is commonly used to show a good six-card or longer suit, but there are various possible agreements about the strength shown by the jump overcall:

- One possibility is to play strong jump overcalls, showing a hand of 17 or more points.
- A second possibility is to play intermediate jump overcalls, showing a hand of 11 to 16 points.
- A third possibility is to play weak jump overcalls, showing a hand similar to a weak two-bid of fewer than 12 (13) total points.

“The weak, or preemptive, jump overcall is the most popular style these days and that is the method we will assume the partnership is using.”

Instructions

“Change the South hand.

“In diamonds: take away the queen and add a low card.

“In clubs: take away the king and add a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1 ♣	2 ♥

SOUTH
 ♠ x x
 ♥ A K J 10 x x
 ♦ x x
 ♣ x x x

“**East is the dealer and opens 1 ♣. What call does South make? (2 ♥.)**

You have enough to make a simple overcall of 1 ♥. That would accomplish two of the objectives of making an overcall: it would let partner know you are interested in competing for the contract, and it would tell partner what suit you would like led if your side defends.

“A simple overcall of 1 ♥, however, doesn’t accomplish the objective of interfering with the opponents’ auction. It takes away virtually no bidding room, since West was unlikely to be bidding 1 ♥. It also provides West with additional options:

- Passing with a borderline hand. West doesn’t have to stretch to bid, since East will get another bid in the auction.
- Making a negative double.
- Cuebidding 2 ♥. We’ll discuss the use of that bid a little later.

“To accomplish another objective of overcalling — making the auction more difficult for the opponents — South can make use of the preemptive jump overcall and jump to 2♥. This has the advantage of taking an entire level of bidding away from the opponents. West can’t bid 1♠, 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦. West might not have enough strength to make a negative double at the two level or to cuebid at the three level. If West does pass, East can’t be sure whether West has some values or nothing at all.

“Another advantage of the preemptive jump overcall is that it is very descriptive. Partner will know that you have a good six-card or longer suit, but not much defensive strength outside of your suit. That should help partner decide whether to compete to a higher level.

“If East had passed, what would South open the bidding with? (2♥.)

A preemptive jump overcall is similar to a weak two-bid. One difference is that the opponents have already opened the bidding — East already knows something about West’s hand. As compensation, East’s opening bid makes it likely that the hand belongs to the opponents. There is more to gain in preventing the opponents from having a smooth auction.

“If East does open the bidding 1♣, does the vulnerability affect South’s decision whether or not to make a jump overcall? (Yes/No.) As with opening a weak preemptive bid, vulnerability is a factor:

- At favorable vulnerability — when the opponents are vulnerable and your side is non vulnerable — you can be very aggressive.
- At equal vulnerability — when both sides are non vulnerable or both sides are vulnerable — you can be reasonably aggressive.
- At unfavorable vulnerability — when your side is vulnerable and the opponents are non vulnerable — you should be more cautious.

“Having said that, most players would make a preemptive jump overcall with this hand at any vulnerability. The suit is very good — you are likely to take five or six tricks with hearts as the trump suit — and you have no outside strength. At unfavorable vulnerability, you could take the conservative approach of overcalling 1♥, but there’s more to gain than to lose by putting maximum pressure on the opponents with a preemptive jump overcall. If you occasionally get doubled and go for 1100, hope for an understanding partner!

“Would it make any difference if East opens 1♦ instead of 1♣? (No.) You would still make a preemptive jump overcall of 2♥.

“What if East’s opening bid is 1 ♠? What does South call? (Pass/2♥/3♥.)

Now you can no longer make a preemptive jump overcall at the two level. You would have to bid 3♥ to make a preemptive jump overcall. You might risk that call at favorable vulnerability, but not at unfavorable vulnerability. It might seem that there is nothing wrong with making a simple overcall of 2♥. After all, you were willing to bid 2♥ after a 1♣ or 1♦ opening. The disadvantage is that the simple overcall is less descriptive than the jump overcall. Partner is likely to expect a stronger hand for a two-level overcall and may misjudge the situation. It’s a matter of partnership style, but you should probably pass if you aren’t willing to risk jumping to 3♥.

“Suppose West is the dealer and opens 1♣. North passes, and East responds 1♦. Now what does South call? (2♥.) You can make a preemptive jump overcall after both opponents have bid. Again, you could overcall 1♥, but a jump to 2♥ is likely to be both more effective and more descriptive.

“Suppose West is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♦. North and East pass. Now what does South call? (1♥.) In the balancing position, there is no real need for preemptive action, since you have the option of passing. The standard agreement is that a jump to 2♥ in this position would be an intermediate jump overcall, showing a good hand with a six-card or longer heart suit and inviting North to bid game.

“Most players would balance with a simple overcall of 1♥. Since North passed over the 1♦ opening bid and you have little defense outside the heart suit, there is some danger that a balancing bid could backfire. West might have a strong hand, and the opponents might get to a better contract — perhaps game. Since East passed, however, the presumption is that your partner is likely to have some of the outstanding strength with a hand unsuitable for an overcall or a takeout double. It would be timid to pass and defend 1♦. It’s even possible that your side can make game.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	3♥

SOUTH
 ♠ x x
 ♥ A K J 10 x x x
 ♦ x
 ♣ x x x

“Suppose East opens the bidding 1♦. What call would South make? (3♥.) With a good seven-card suit, you can afford to make a double jump overcall. This is also a preemptive bid. It is similar to an opening three-level preempt.

“At unfavorable vulnerability, you might choose to overcall only 2♥. This is still a preemptive jump overcall, but might be safer than a jump to 3♥. You can use your judgment. If you would open the bidding 3♥ at unfavorable vulnerability, then you should probably make the same bid when East opens the bidding.

“**Suppose East opens 1♠. What is South’s call? (3♥.)** You would still jump to 3♥. This would be a jump overcall rather than a double jump overcall, but it would send the same message to partner — a weak hand with a good seven-card heart suit.

“As you can see, the level to which you jump depends on a number of factors — the length and quality of your suit, the opponent’s opening bid and the vulnerability. Like a preemptive opening bid, you are weighing risk against potential gain.

“**If East opens with a weak 2♦ bid, what call would South make? (2♥.)** Although you have the values for a preemptive jump overcall, you should not jump to 3♥. The standard agreement is that you do not preempt over a preempt. A bid of 3♥ shows a very good hand — too strong for an overcall of 2♥. Instead, settle for a simple overcall of 2♥. Partner might expect a little more outside strength, but the length in hearts should be adequate compensation.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the ace.

“In hearts: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥

SOUTH
 ♠ A x x
 ♥ A K J 10 x x
 ♦ x
 ♣ x x x

“**Suppose East opens 1♦. What call would South make? (1♥.)** Although you have a good six-card heart suit, don’t make a preemptive jump overcall with a good hand. You won’t be painting an accurate description for your partner. Instead, settle for a simple overcall of 1♥.”

Summary

“When the opponents have opened the bidding, a jump overcall is weak and preemptive.

- A jump to the two level typically shows a good six-card suit, similar to an opening weak two-bid.
- A jump to the three level typically shows a good seven-card suit, similar to an opening three-level preemptive bid.

“The jump overcall is both obstructive and descriptive. If your partner makes a preemptive jump overcall, you should respond in the same manner as if partner had opened a weak two-bid or three-bid.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Three — Jump Overcalls in a Suit

What call would East make with each of the following hands after this auction?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	?	
1) ♠ K Q J 9 7 6 ♥ 7 ♦ 10 9 7 3 ♣ 6 4	2) ♠ A Q J 8 7 3 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ A 4 ♣ 7 3	3) ♠ K Q 10 9 7 6 3 ♥ 8 ♦ 7 ♣ 9 6 5 2	

Exercise Three Answer — Jump Overcalls in a Suit

- 1) 2♠. With a good six-card suit and little else, this is a good hand for a weak jump overcall. The weak jump overcall is similar to an opening weak two-bid. East makes the auction difficult for the opponents, while describing the hand to West.
- 2) 1♠. This hand is too strong for a weak jump overcall. East makes a simple overcall at the one level. If the partnership used intermediate jump overcalls, rather than weak jump overcalls, this hand would qualify as a 2♠ bid.
- 3) 3♠. With a good seven-card suit and a weak hand, East makes a preemptive jump overcall at the three level. This is similar to an opening 3♠ bid. Most players would take the same action whether vulnerable or non-vulnerable. Jumping to only 2♠ wouldn't be unreasonable, however, if East–West were vulnerable against non vulnerable.

Overcalling a 1NT Opening Bid – Landy

Introduction

“Overcalls occur most frequently when an opponent has opened the bidding in a suit. There’s no reason, however, that you can’t make an overcall when an opponent opens 1NT. There are, however, some additional considerations.”

Instructions

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: add the jack and a low card.

“In hearts: take away the king and a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	2♣

SOUTH

♠ A J x x x

♥ A J 10 x

♦ x

♣ x x x

“If East opened the bidding 1♣, what call would South make? (1♠/Pass.) With no support for diamonds, the hand is unsuitable for a takeout double. Your spade suit isn’t perfect, but most players would probably risk a one-level overcall of 1♠. If your side doesn’t belong in spades, there’s the possibility of finding a safe landing spot in hearts.

“Now, suppose East opens 1NT. Discuss with the others at your table the advantages and disadvantages of overcalling.”

Give the students a couple of minutes to discuss the pros and cons of overcalling a 1NT.

“There are some disadvantages to overcalling a 1NT opening bid:

- You would have to introduce the spades at the two level.
- East has shown a strong hand of 15 to 17 HCP with at least some length in spades.
- West is well-positioned to make a penalty double of your overcall when appropriate. West knows a lot about East’s hand.
- If you are in trouble in spades, you would have to go to the three level to play in hearts. Since North doesn’t know about your hearts, you may be getting deeper into trouble.

“There are some advantages to overcalling a 1NT opening bid:

- Despite East’s opening bid, your side still may be able to compete for the contract. It’s even possible that your side can make a game if you can find a good fit.
- If you do become the declarer, you will have the advantage of knowing a lot about East’s hand in terms of both high cards and distribution. This should help you during the play.

- Without interference, the opponents will often bid accurately to their best contract. Most partnerships are very familiar with their responses and rebids after a 1NT opening bid. By overcalling, you may make it more difficult for the opponents to find their best spot.

“Because of the added danger when entering the auction after an opening bid of 1NT, you should usually overcall with either:

- A good one-suited hand. This offers some protection against being doubled. Even if you are doubled, the penalty may be less than the opponents could make in their own contract.
- A two-suited hand. This also offers some protection since you are likely to have a fit in at least one of the two suits, making it difficult for the opponents to double for penalty.

“Using natural overcalls, you can’t show a two-suited hand with a single bid. So, most partnerships use some form of conventional interference over an opponent’s 1NT opening bid that let’s them come into the auction relatively safely with most one-suited and two-suited hands.

“One of the simplest conventions was developed by Alvin Landy, the CEO for the ACBL throughout most of the 50’s and 60’s. Using the Landy convention, an overcall of 2♣ is conventional (artificial) and shows both major suits. All other overcalls are natural. This allows you to show any single-suited hand at the two level except clubs and the most valuable two-suited hand — since you can compete most effectively when you have hearts and spades. It’s also an easy convention to remember since it is similar in nature to the Stayman convention.

“If the partnership is using the Landy convention, what call would South make if East opened 1NT? (2♣.) By bidding 2♣, you get to show both hearts and spades, letting partner choose the best fit. Ideally, you would like to have at least five cards in each suit but, even with only four-card support for hearts, using Landy is safer than putting all of your eggs into one basket with a 2♠ overcall.

“Notice that partner can choose a major at the two level. You won’t have to get to the three level to find a fit in hearts.

“Suppose it is West who opens 1NT and both North and East pass. What call does South make? (2♣.) You can use Landy in the balancing position as well as directly over a 1NT opening bid.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away the ace and add the queen and a low card.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	2♣

SOUTH

♠ A J x x x

♥ Q J 10 x x

♦ x

♣ x x

“**What call would South make if East opens the bidding 1NT? (2♣.)** This hand is ideal for the Landy convention. If partner has three cards in either major suit, you will have an eight-card fit. You don’t need a strong hand to come in over an opponent’s 1NT opening if you have good distribution. It’s unlikely that your side can make a game contract when an opponent has opened 1NT. The objective is to either make a small partscore or interfere with the opponents’ auction. Some players would still overcall if the ♥Q were a low heart.

“Leave the South hand as it is and construct a hand in front of North.

“In spades: a low card.

“In hearts: the king and two low cards

“In diamonds: the ace, the jack and three low cards.

“In clubs: the queen and three low cards.

NORTH	♠ x	♥ K x x	♦ A J x x x	♣ Q x x x
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WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	2♥	1NT	2♣
Pass		Pass	Pass

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ x
♣ x x

“**East opens 1NT. What call does South make? (2♣.)** South shows both majors with the conventional (artificial) 2♣ overcall.

“**West passes. What call does North make? (2♥.)** North prefers hearts to spades, so North bids 2♥. There isn’t much point in bidding 2♦. With support for hearts and spades, South is unlikely to have a fit for diamonds. If North–South appear to be struggling to find a fit, it’s more likely that East–West might choose to double for penalty. If North bids a confident 2♥, it’s less likely that North–South will get doubled, even if the partnership is in a 4–3 fit.

“Even though North has 10 high-card points, North should not be stretching to reach game without an exceptional fit. North should keep in mind that the main objective of coming into the auction over the opponent’s 1NT bid is to compete for the contract and interfere with the opponents’ auction — not to reach game.

“If East passes North’s 2♥ bid, what call does South make? (Pass.) South has done enough with the 2♣ call and should be very cautious about bidding any more. South has forced North to pick a major suit and North might not have even three-card support.

“How will North–South fare in a 2♥ contract? (Seven or eight tricks.) North will be declarer. Playing the contract from the short side — the hand with the fewer trumps — can be an advantage. East–West know from the auction that South holds hearts and spades, but they don’t have any idea what North’s hand looks like.

“Unless East leads the ♥A and another heart early, North will usually take eight tricks by ruffing two of South’s spade losers. Even if the defenders do lead trumps, North should take at least seven tricks.

“Down one is unlikely to be a poor result for North–South. After all, East–West have the balance of strength — 22 HCPs. The overcall may gain in other ways. East–West may have difficulty determining their best spot and get too high. If East does play in a notrump contract, South will know that North prefers hearts to spades and can lead a heart instead of a spade.

“What might happen if North–South were not using the Landy convention? (2♠ contract or worse.) If South doesn’t come into the auction, East–West will probably play in 1NT, a contract they may well make — especially if South chooses to lead a spade rather than a heart. If South overcalls 2♠, North probably won’t want to risk getting any higher. The partnership will play in its 5–1 fit, going down at least two tricks. If they are doubled in 2♠, they would have to run to the three level to find their heart fit and would now be too high.

“It’s easy to say that perhaps South should overcall 2♥ instead of 2♠, but that wouldn’t work well if North’s hearts and spades were reversed.”

Summary

“The Landy convention is only one of many possibilities for entering the auction after an opponent opens 1NT. You can find additional possibilities in the Appendix of the textbook. Some are much more complex, and you should always discuss any convention thoroughly with your partner before trying it out. The Landy convention does, however, show some of the advantages of using conventional methods to reduce the risk when coming into the auction. We’ll look at that more in the next lesson.”

Handling an Opponent's Overcall

Introduction

“When an opponent overcalls your partner’s opening bid, you’ve already seen one conventional method for dealing with interference — the negative double. If you want to double for penalty, you have to pass and wait for partner to reopen with a takeout double. Let’s look at another possibility when partner’s opening bid is overcalled.”

Instructions

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: add a low card.

“In hearts: add a low card.

“In diamonds: take away the ace.

“In clubs: take away two low cards and add the ace.

“Change the South hand.

“In spades: take away the jack and a low card.

“In diamonds: add the queen.

“In clubs: add the king.

NORTH ♠ x x ♥ K x x x ♦ J x x x ♣ A Q x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 ♠</td> <td>2 ♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3 ♥</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	2 ♠	Pass	1 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	3 ♥	SOUTH ♠ A x x ♥ Q J 10 x x ♦ Q x ♣ K x x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
1 ♠	2 ♠	Pass	1 ♥											
Pass	Pass	Pass	3 ♥											

“**South is the dealer. What would South call?** (1 ♥.) 12 high-card points plus a five-card heart suit — a 1 ♥ opening bid.

“**If West passes, what would North respond?** (3 ♥.) With 10 HCPs plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton spade, North can make a limit raise of 3 ♥, showing four-card support and 10 or 11 points.

“**If East passes, what would South call?** (Pass.) With a minimum-opening bid, South would reject the invitation and pass.

“**Suppose South opens 1 ♥ and West overcalls 1 ♠. What does North call?** (2 ♠/3 ♥.) The partnership could continue to use limit raises in this situation, and North could jump to 3 ♥. That doesn’t take full advantage of the bidding room that is available. It’s true that West’s overcall has taken away some bidding room, but it also has made available a cuebid of 2 ♠. Most partnerships use the cuebid of the opponent’s suit to show a fit with partner and the strength for a limit raise or better. North would cuebid 2 ♠ to show support for hearts and to invite opener to bid game.

“If North cuebids 2♠ and East passes, what does South bid? (3♥.)
With a minimum opening bid, South simply returns to the agreed suit, 3♥.
Effectively, South is turning down North’s invitation.

“If West passes, what does North call now? (Pass.) Having shown a limit raise in hearts and hearing that South does not want to bid game, North passes. The partnership stops in 3♥, exactly as if North had made a limit raise.

“Suppose South opens 1♥ and West overcalls 2♦. What does North bid? (3♦.) North can do the same thing — cuebid the opponent’s suit to show strength for at least a limit raise. The 3♦ bid says nothing about diamonds, only that North has a fit for hearts and enough to invite game.

“What would South call if East passes the 3♦ cuebid? (3♥.) With a minimum, South would go back to the agreed suit at the cheapest available level.

“What would North call if West passes? (Pass.) As before, North would accept South’s decision to stop in partscore.

“Suppose South opens the bidding 1♥, West overcalls 1♠ and North cuebids 2♠. East now bids 3♠. What does South call? (Pass.) Since South doesn’t have enough to bid game opposite a limit raise, South would pass.

“South passes East’s raise to 3♠, West passes and the auction comes back to North. What does North call? (Pass/Double.) Since South wasn’t willing to go beyond 3♥ and North has nothing extra, North should pass and choose to defend 3♠. If North is aggressive — and is a good defender — North might choose to double the opponents’ contract, but there’s no guarantee that North–South can defeat 3♠.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: add the ace.

“In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1♠	2♠	Pass	1♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	4♥	SOUTH
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH														
1♠	2♠	Pass	1♥														
Pass	Pass	Pass	4♥														
♠ x x				♠ A x x													
♥ K x x x				♥ A Q J 10 x x													
♦ J x x x				♦ Q x													
♣ A Q x				♣ K x													

“What would South open the bidding? (1♥.)

“Suppose West overcalls 1♠. What call would North make? (2♠.) North shows the strength for a limit raise by cuebidding 2♠.

“If East passes, what call does South make? (4♥.) South has enough to accept a game invitation and jumps to 4♥. South can’t bid 3♥, because that shows a minimum hand, and North will pass. It’s as though the auction went 1♥–3♥–4♥ without any interference.

“The auction would be similar if South opened the bidding 1♥ and West overcalled 2♦. North could cuebid 3♦, and South would jump to 4♥, accepting the invitation.

“Change the North hand.

“In diamonds: take away the jack and add the ace.

“Change the South hand.

“In hearts: take away the ace.

“In clubs: add a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x x</p> <p>♥ K x x x</p> <p>♦ A x x x</p> <p>♣ A Q x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1♠	2♠	Pass	1♥	Pass	4♥	Pass	3♥	Pass			Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A x x</p> <p>♥ Q J 10 x x</p> <p>♦ Q x</p> <p>♣ K x x</p>
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH															
1♠	2♠	Pass	1♥															
Pass	4♥	Pass	3♥															
Pass			Pass															

“**What would South open? (1♥.)**

“**If West overcalls 1♠, what call would North make? (2♠.)** A cuebid shows the strength for a limit raise or better.

“**If East passes, what call does South make? (3♥.)** South assumes that North has only the strength for a limit raise. With a minimum opening bid, South rejects the invitation by bidding 3♥.

“**After West passes, what call does North make? (4♥.)** North shows a hand strong enough for game by raising to 4♥.

“**When East passes, what call does South make? (Pass.)** South now knows that North has support for hearts and enough strength to raise to game.

“If the partnership uses the Jacoby 2NT to show a forcing raise of opener’s major, the standard agreement is that this convention is off in competition — when West doubles or overcalls. A bid of 2NT after an overcall becomes a natural, invitational bid. The cuebid, therefore, takes the place of both the limit raise and the forcing raise.

“**Suppose South opens 1♥ and West makes a preemptive jump overcall of 2♠. What does North call? (3♠.)** North again can make use of the cuebid to show a fit with opener. Since the partnership is forced to the game level, North obviously has enough for a game contract. With only enough for a limit raise, North would simply bid 3♥ and leave the final decision to South.

“What is the advantage of using the cuebid as a limit raise or better? It frees up the immediate jump raise for other purposes.

“Change the North hand.

“In diamonds: take away the ace and add two low cards.

“In clubs: take away the ace and the queen and add a low card.

NORTH ♠ x x ♥ K x x x ♦ x x x x x ♣ x x	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;">WEST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">NORTH</th> <th style="width: 25%;">EAST</th> <th style="width: 25%;">SOUTH</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 ♠</td> <td>3 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1 ♠	3 ♥	Pass	1 ♥	Pass			Pass	SOUTH ♠ A x x ♥ Q J 10 x x ♦ Q x ♣ K x x
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
1 ♠	3 ♥	Pass	1 ♥											
Pass			Pass											

“**South opens the bidding 1 ♥ and West overcalls 1 ♠. What call does North make?** (3 ♥/2 ♥/Pass.) Holding only 3 high-card points, it might seem that North should be happy that West has come into the auction. North could sit back quietly and let East–West play the hand. In competitive bridge, however, the exact opposite is true. With four-card support for partner and a weak hand, North wants to make the maximum effort to make East–West uncomfortable. Even a raise to 2 ♥ would be considered timid by many players. Instead, North should jump to 3 ♥!

“A jump raise to 3 ♥ is weak and preemptive in competition. It isn’t a limit raise. With a limit raise or better, North would start with a cuebid of 2 ♠. The jump to 3 ♥ shows four-card support and a weak hand. It is meant as an obstructive bid, not a constructive bid.

“If North were to bid only 2 ♥, East would have an easy time. With support for spades, East could raise to 2 ♠ to compete, jump to 3 ♠, cuebid 3 ♥ or jump to 4 ♠. Whatever the East–West methods, East would get to describe the hand accurately, and West would know what to do.

“If North jumps to 3 ♥, East doesn’t have as many options. East might have only enough to raise to 2 ♠ and have to pass — keeping West in the dark about the spade fit. East might stretch a bit to bid 3 ♠, but how does West know whether East is stretching or would have jumped to 3 ♠ or cuebid 3 ♥ if North had not interfered. West may misjudge the situation and bid too much or too little. Taking away an extra level of bidding from the opponents may be very effective.

“**Suppose North jumps to 3 ♥, after the 1 ♠ overcall, and East bids 3 ♠. What call does South make?** (Pass.) Since North didn’t cuebid, South knows the jump to 3 ♥ is weak, not strong. South should pass, since North’s bid has already done its damage. East–West may stop in partscore or bid game, but that is beyond South’s control. South will hope that West guesses incorrectly. With a more suitable playing hand, South might further North’s preemptive action or sacrifice if the opponents do bid game. North’s bid has given South enough information to make a good choice.

“**Is there danger in jumping to 3 ♥ with the North hand?** (Yes/No.) There is always danger in overbidding. It’s a question of risk versus gain. You have to keep an eye on the vulnerability, but the better the fit with partner’s suit and the more distributional the hand, the safer it is to preempt.

“**How would North–South fare in a contract of 3 ♥?** (Down one or two.) South will have to lose one spade trick; the other spade loser can be ruffed in dummy. South has to lose a heart trick and two diamond tricks. South

figures to lose one or two club tricks, depending on the location of the ♣A. South might even lose three club tricks, if it isn't possible to arrange to ruff a club in dummy. So, South is likely to go down one or two tricks.

“How would East–West fare in a spade contract? (Likely take 10 tricks.) East–West can probably make a game in spades. They lose the ♠A, but only have to lose one heart trick if their hearts are divided exactly 2–2. They might lose a trick to the ♦Q, but may not. Since South opened the bidding, declarer will probably guess where the ♦Q is located. South may or may not get a trick with the ♣K, depending on which opponent holds the ♣A. On a lucky day, East–West might make a slam in spades!

“North’s 3♥ bid, therefore, has more to gain than lose. Even if North–South are doubled, East–West will usually make at least a game on these cards. Better still, East–West may miss bidding their game or overreach and get too high.

“Change the North hand.

“In spades: take away a low card.

“In hearts: add a low card.

<p>NORTH</p> <p>♠ x</p> <p>♥ K x x x x</p> <p>♦ x x x x x</p> <p>♣ x x</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">WEST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">NORTH</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">EAST</td> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px;">SOUTH</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♥</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> </tr> </table>	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	1♠	4♥	Pass	1♥	Pass			Pass	<p>SOUTH</p> <p>♠ A x x</p> <p>♥ Q J 10 x x</p> <p>♦ Q x</p> <p>♣ K x x</p>
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH											
1♠	4♥	Pass	1♥											
Pass			Pass											

“South opens 1♥ and West overcalls 1♠. What call does North make? (4♥/3♥.) Depending on the vulnerability, North might jump all the way to 4♥. If vulnerable against non vulnerable, North may make a conservative jump to 3♥.

“How does South know that North is bidding on weakness rather than strength? (No cuebid.) With a strong hand, North would have started with a cuebid — showing a limit raise or better.”

Summary

“Using the cuebid to show a limit raise or better, when partner’s opening bid has been overcalled, allows the partnership to use preemptive jump raises in competition.”

➡ “Let’s do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.”

Exercise Four — Handling an Opponent's Overcall

What call would East make with each of the following hands after this auction?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♠	2 ♥	?	
1) ♠ K 8 7 ♥ 10 8 4 3 ♦ A 9 8 5 ♣ 9 2	2) ♠ Q 10 7 3 ♥ J 8 ♦ K Q 9 7 ♣ K 8 2	3) ♠ K 9 7 4 ♥ 10 7 ♦ 5 2 ♣ Q J 8 3 2	
4) ♠ A J 8 4 ♥ 9 3 ♦ A K 4 ♣ Q 7 6 2	5) ♠ Q J 9 7 4 ♥ 3 ♦ Q 10 8 6 4 ♣ 10 3	6) ♠ 10 7 ♥ 9 6 5 ♦ A J 9 3 ♣ K Q 8 5	

Exercise Four Answer — Handling an Opponent's Overcall

- 1) 2 ♠. The opponent's overcall doesn't prevent East from showing support for spades.
- 2) Cuebid 3 ♥. A jump to 3 ♠ would be preemptive after North's overcall. A cuebid shows support for West's spades and the strength for at least a limit raise. It isn't forcing to game. If West rebids 3 ♠, showing a minimum, East can pass.
- 3) 3 ♠. The jump to 3 ♠ is a weak, preemptive action after an opponent's overcall. It shows a weak hand with four-card support.
- 4) Cuebid 3 ♥. The cuebid of the opponent's suit shows a limit raise or better. On this hand, East will continue to game even if West rebids only 3 ♠. An immediate jump to 4 ♠ would be preemptive, and a slam might be missed if West has a good hand.
- 5) 4 ♠. This is a weak, preemptive raise, and the same bid would apply if North hadn't overcalled.
- 6) Double. This is a negative double, showing support for the unbid suits and enough strength to compete for the contract.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 3*

Bid and Play – Deal 1: When in Doubt, Pass

Guidelines for Teachers: On this first deal, East–West will make 2♠ while North–South can make 4♦. The real emphasis is on the auction – to see the effect of a preemptive jump overcall. Each player will have decisions to make in the auction, so there is likely to be considerable diversity in the actual contracts that are reached.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal where we see the preemptive jump overcall in action.”

Instructions

“North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E–Z Deal Cards: #3, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North	♠ K 7				
Vul: None	♥ 7 5				
	♦ K J 3 2				
	♣ A Q 10 9 7				
♠ 4 3		N		♠ A J 10 9 8 5	
♥ K Q 6 3 2		W E		♥ J 10 8	
♦ A 9		S		♦ 8 6	
♣ K J 6 3				♣ 5 4	
	♠ Q 6 2				
	♥ A 9 4				
	♦ Q 10 7 5 4				
	♣ 8 2				

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. To keep the discussion fairly simple, restrict the final contract to the likely result of 2♠ where eight tricks can be made.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	2♠	Pass (?)
Pass	Pass (?)		

* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

“North starts the bidding in the longest suit. With a good six-card spade suit and a weak hand, East makes a preemptive jump overcall of 2♠.

“East’s 2♠ bid makes the auction difficult for the opponents. South doesn’t have enough to bid 4♦ and, with only three-card support for hearts, the hand is unsuitable for a negative double. South might try 2NT, but that’s a little much with only 8 HCPs and a dubious spade stopper. South’s best choice is to pass, hoping to get to show some values later in the auction.

“Although West holds an opening bid, East has described a weak hand that is only useful with spades as the trump suit. West passes. The partnership is probably high enough already.

“North has a difficult choice of calls when the auction comes back around. With only a doubleton heart, North’s hand is unsuitable for a reopening double, and the ♠K is of dubious value. North should probably pass and choose to defend.

“In an experienced partnership, North might be able to reopen with an “unusual” 2NT, looking for a minor-suit fit. In most partnerships, however, this bid would be interpreted as natural and could give South a misleading picture of North’s strength.

“If East’s 2♠ bid does buy the contract, East–West will have effectively “stolen” the contract. North–South can take ten tricks in diamonds.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 2♠ by East.

Suggested Opening Lead

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“South is on lead against 2♠ and would start with the ♣8, top of the doubleton in partner’s suit.”

Suggested Play

There are many possible variations in the play. Even the suggested contract of 2♠ can be defeated with double-dummy play. Limit your discussion.

“East has two potential spade losers, one heart loser, one diamond loser and two club losers. East could hope that South has either the ♣A or the ♣Q, but the auction and South’s opening lead make that seem unlikely. If the defenders don’t switch to diamonds soon enough, East may be able to discard the diamond loser on an extra winner in dummy.

“East’s best chance to avoid two spade losers is to take repeated finesses through North. That should work if North has the ♠K or the ♠Q, or both. Dummy has one entry with the ♦A, and declarer can create a second entry in the heart suit.”

Suggested Defense

“Perfect defense will defeat 2♠. Suppose South leads a club. The ♣J is played from dummy, and North wins the ♣Q. North, hoping to get a ruff, can lead a heart. South, taking the inference that East isn’t likely to have a four-card heart suit for the 2♠ bid, (which would give North a singleton heart), can let declarer win this trick. If declarer now takes a spade finesse, losing to South’s ♠Q, South can play the ♥A and another heart to give North a ruff with the ♠K. North can now switch to a diamond to knock out dummy’s ♦A before East is able to discard the diamond loser. The defenders will take six tricks.

“That defense, however, is double dummy, and it won’t be found even by many experienced defenders. It is more likely that North will win the first trick with the ♣Q, play the ♣A and lead a third round of clubs. Declarer can now make the contract in a couple of ways. Declarer can discard the diamond loser on the third round of clubs, letting South ruff. On gaining the lead, declarer can simply play the ♠A and another spade. Declarer loses two clubs, two spade tricks and the ♥A. East also could ruff the third round of clubs with the ♠8. Whether or not South overruffs, declarer can make eight tricks.

“In summary, 2♠ is a good spot for East–West. If North–South do manage to find their diamond fit, the only losers are one spade, one heart and one diamond, since the club finesse is successful. In fact, if East–West don’t lead hearts soon enough, the heart loser might disappear.

“The play is interesting if North–South reach a notrump contract. If South is declarer and West leads a spade, declarer should play North’s ♠K on the first trick — or duck the first trick completely — to prevent East from establishing the spade suit and keeping a spade entry. East–West can counter this play by leading hearts to establish enough winners in that suit before the ♦A is knocked out. If North is declarer in a notrump contract, East will have to lead a heart right away to prevent declarer from taking at least nine tricks.”

Bid and Play — Deal 2: Cuebids Get the Message Across

Guidelines for Teachers: On this second deal, the bidding is pretty straightforward. North-South should win the contract at 2♠. If they bid higher, the defenders will probably defeat the contract. Explain the basic play concept of putting a loser on a loser to the group. Even a contract of 2♠ is in jeopardy unless declarer uses the loser on a loser play.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal where the cuebid can be used to best describe the advancer’s hand.”

Instructions

“East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E-Z Deal Cards: #3, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)

Dealer: East	♠ K 8 2	
Vul: N-S	♥ A 4 2	
	♦ Q 7 6 3	
	♣ Q 7 3	
♠ J 9 6	N	♠ 4 3
♥ K 9 5 3	W E	♥ Q 10 7
♦ J 4	S	♦ A K 10 9 2
♣ 10 6 4 2		♣ A 9 5
	♠ A Q 10 7 5	
	♥ J 8 6	
	♦ 8 5	
	♣ K J 8	

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. The main point of the hand is the loser on a loser play concept, so get all of your students to the point where the contract is 2♠, before you let them play out the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

“East opens the bidding 1♦. South overcalls 1♠ to show a good five-card suit. West doesn’t have enough to make a negative double and passes. North

has too much for a simple raise to 2♠, but a jump to 3♠ would be preemptive and show four-card support — and 3♠ might get the partnership too high if South has a minimum overcall. Instead, North cuebids 2♦, showing an interest in reaching game. After East passes, South rebids 2♠ to show a minimum hand for the overcall with no interest in getting to game. North has no reason to overrule partner's decision and, having shown support with the cuebid, passes to leave the partnership in a partscore.

“Without the use of the cuebid, there's a reasonable chance that North–South would get too high on this hand. The cuebid allows North to try for game without getting beyond the two level when South has less than an opening bid.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

“West is on lead and would probably start with the ♦J, top of a doubleton in partner's suit.”

Suggested Play

“The 2♠ contract will be in jeopardy unless declarer uses the loser on a loser play.

“Declarer has two heart losers, two diamond losers and one club loser. To make the contract, declarer must avoid losing a trump trick. That won't be a problem if the suit is divided 3–2 and South can gain the lead to draw trumps, but there is a complication. After winning two diamond tricks, East may lead a third round of diamonds. If South ruffs with a low trump, West can overruff. If South ruffs with a high trump, the ♠A or ♠Q, the defenders will eventually take a trick with the ♠J.

“South might try ruffing the third round of diamonds with the ♠10, hoping West doesn't have the ♠J, but that doesn't work. On the surface, it seems that South must lose a trump trick, if East plays another winning diamond after winning the first two tricks. South still has two heart losers and one club loser — and that's one too many.

“**There is a way to make the contract.** Suppose West wins the first trick with the ♦J and continues with a second diamond, which East wins with the ♦9. East now leads the ♦K. Since ruffing either high or low won't work, South shouldn't ruff at all! Instead, South should discard a heart. South planned on two heart losers anyway, and this is as good a time as

any. If East continues by leading the \spadesuit A, again South can't win by ruffing either high or low. So, South discards another heart. In effect, South has exchanged the two heart losers for two extra diamond losers.

“The advantage of discarding the heart losers is that South can now avoid a trump loser. If East leads anything except another diamond, South can draw trumps after gaining the lead. If East leads a fifth round of diamonds, South can discard a club and West is helpless. If West doesn't ruff, declarer wins the trick by ruffing in dummy and can then draw trumps. If West ruffs, declarer overruffs in the dummy and can draw West's two remaining trumps. All declarer loses are four diamond tricks and the \clubsuit A.

“The tactic of throwing a loser on a losing trick is referred to as discarding a loser on a loser. South doesn't mind losing two extra diamond tricks while discarding hearts, since the two heart tricks would have been lost anyway. By exchanging the losers, however, declarer avoids the loss of a trump trick.”

Suggested Defense

“As we have discussed, the best defense is for East to continue leading diamond winners. If declarer ruffs, West can overruff and the contract is defeated. The defenders will eventually take two heart tricks and a club trick to go along with the two diamond tricks and the trump trick.

“If South does discard two hearts on the third and fourth rounds of diamonds, East's best defense is to lead a fifth round of diamonds — perhaps after taking the \clubsuit A somewhere along the way. West can ruff the fifth round of diamonds with the \spadesuit 9, forcing declarer to overruff with dummy's \spadesuit K to win the trick. Declarer can escape without a trump loser at this point by playing the \spadesuit A and \spadesuit Q, but doesn't know for certain that the remaining trump divide 2–2. Declarer might decide to finesse the \spadesuit 10, hoping East started with the \spadesuit J. West will get an unexpected trick with the \spadesuit J to defeat the contract.”

Bid and Play — Deal 3: Using Landy with Two-Suited Hands

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal involves some complex variations. The contract will be 2♥ played from the short trump side, if the auction goes as planned using Landy.

Introduction

“Let’s play a deal where Landy is the perfect bid to describe the overcaller’s hand.”

Instructions

“South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E–Z Deal Cards: #3, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

Dealer: South	♠ K 10 7 4										
Vul: E–W	♥ A 6 3										
	♦ K 6 5										
	♣ A Q 8										
♠ 5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 9 6 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 10 7		♥ K J 9 5 2									
♦ A 10 8 7 2		♦ J 9									
♣ K 6 4 3		♣ 7									
	♠ Q 8 3										
	♥ 8 4										
	♦ Q 4 3										
	♣ J 10 9 5 2										

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. Using Landy, the bidding is pretty simple. Make sure everyone gets to 2♥ before you let them play out the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
Pass	1NT	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

“After two passes, North opens the bidding 1NT. East would like to compete, but it is dangerous to enter the auction over 1NT. If East picks the wrong suit, the partnership might get into trouble if West doesn’t have a fit. Having a two-suited hand provides some safety, since partner is likely to have a fit for at least one of the suits. If East–West use the Landy convention, East can overcall 2♣, showing both major suits.

“South doesn’t have enough to say anything over East’s intervention. South’s clubs aren’t strong enough to double the conventional bid for penalty. West’s diamonds aren’t good enough to suggest that suit as trump. East has shown both major suits and could be very short in diamonds. Since East has asked West to pick a major, West should bid 2♥, which will probably end the auction.”

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“North has a difficult choice of opening leads. Knowing West prefers hearts to spades, North might choose to lead a trump, trying to prevent West from ruffing spades. North might lead a low heart, in case South holds some help in the suit. On regaining the lead, North will be in a position to play the ♥A and another heart.”

Suggested Play

The emphasis on this hand should be on the importance of establishing side suits while retaining control. Most students will go for ruffing a loser early rather than look at the long range plan.

“If North does lead a low heart at trick one, West needs to plan the play carefully. From West’s perspective, there are only six winners: four hearts, the ♠A and the ♦A. West might consider ruffing club losers in the dummy, but the defenders will regain the lead and play two more rounds of trumps. A better plan is to try to establish the diamond suit.

“Declarer wins the first heart in dummy (East) and leads the ♦J. If South plays a low diamond, declarer can take a finesse, losing to North’s ♦K. If North then leads the ♥A and another heart, declarer can win again in dummy and lead the ♦9, overtaking with the ♦10 to repeat the finesse. With the favorable lie of the diamonds, this will give declarer four diamond tricks. Combined with four tricks from the heart suit and the ♠A, declarer will make the contract with an overtrick. If South covers the ♦J with the ♦Q, West can win the ♦A and then drive out North’s ♦K. If North leads more hearts, declarer can win in the West hand and take the diamond winners. Again, declarer takes at least nine tricks.

“Declarer should avoid being too eager to ruff any of East’s spades. The defenders could then prevent West from getting four tricks from the diamond suit, because of entry problems.”

Suggested Defense

“If declarer does go about establishing tricks in the diamond suit, there isn’t much the defenders can do. If declarer does ruff a spade in the West hand, the defenders can hold declarer to eight tricks. The defenders can lead trumps to prevent declarer from ruffing a second spade. If South covers the ♦J when it is led from dummy, West won’t have enough entries to get four tricks from the suit. Declarer still will be able to establish a trick with dummy’s fifth spade as a trick and take eight tricks.

“East–West do well to get into the auction, since they can take at least eight tricks with hearts as trumps. If East passes 1NT and that ends the auction, East will have to guess to lead a heart and not a spade. If East leads a spade against 1NT, declarer can make the contract.

“If East overcalls 2♠, the auction will probably end there. East can be defeated in that contract, losing three spade tricks, one heart, one diamond and one club.”

Bid and Play — Deal 4: Dealing with Interference

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal demonstrates another example of a loser on a loser play, if the bidding and play go as planned.

Introduction

“Let’s play another deal where a loser on a loser can be a valuable tool in making the contract. But first, let’s see how the responder uses a cuebid to describe the hand.”

Instructions

“West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction.”

(E–Z Deal Cards: #3, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)

Dealer: West	♠ K 5					
Vul: Both	♥ A Q 8 6 2					
	♦ J 7 4					
	♣ K 5 2					
♠ Q 10 7 6 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ J 8	
N						
W E						
S						
♥ J 9 4		♥ 10				
♦ 9 2		♦ A K 10 8 6 3				
♣ J 10 8		♣ A 9 7 3				
	♠ A 9 4 2					
	♥ K 7 5 3					
	♦ Q 5					
	♣ Q 6 4					

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. Since the emphasis on this hand should be the loser on a loser play, make sure everyone gets to a contract of 3♥ before you let them play out the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♥	2♦	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

“North opens 1♥, and East has enough to overcall 2♦. If East had passed, South would have made a limit raise to 3♥. After the interference, the usual agreement is that a jump raise is weak and preemptive. To show the strength for a limit raise or better, South starts with a cuebid of 3♦.

“West passes, and the auction comes back to North. With a minimum opening bid, North returns to 3♥, rejecting South’s invitation.

“East has already described the hand with the overcall and, with no support from West, bidding any more would be dangerous. South also should pass. South has only enough strength for a limit raise, and North has declined the invitation by rebidding 3♥. South’s pass should end the auction.”

Suggested Opening Lead

“Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let’s review the play and defense.

“Against 3♥, East would lead the ♦A, top of touching honors — or the ♦K, if the partnership leads the king from this combination.”

Suggested Play

Again, remember the emphasis is on the loser on a loser play, a continuation of the discussion you started on the second deal.

“Assuming the missing hearts aren’t divided 4–0, there are no heart losers, three diamond losers and two club losers. After the opening lead, declarer can establish a winner in the diamond suit. Given East’s overcall, however, there is some danger that West will be able to ruff declarer’s diamond winner.

“Suppose East plays the ♦A, the ♦K and a third round of diamonds. If declarer ruffs low, West may overruff. There are still two potential club losers, so the contract might be defeated. Declarer could ruff the third round of diamonds with the ♥K, but that might promote a trump winner for the defenders, unless the missing hearts are divided 2–2.

“Declarer’s best play is to discard a club from dummy on the third round of diamonds. West can ruff, but declarer avoids losing two club tricks. The third round of clubs can be ruffed in dummy after trumps have been drawn. Declarer loses two diamond tricks, a ruff and one club trick.”

Suggested Defense

“On the lead of the ♦A, West should play the ♦9 as an encouraging signal. East can continue with the ♦K and a third round of diamonds. As noted above, if declarer ruffs with dummy’s ♥K, West will eventually get a trick with the ♥J.

“If declarer ruffs with a low heart, West can overruff. Now the defenders must be careful to get both of their club tricks. If West leads back the ♣J, for example, and declarer plays a low club, East must avoid the temptation to play the ♣A. That would give declarer two club tricks with the ♣K and ♣Q. Instead, East should play low, letting dummy’s ♣Q win the trick. Now declarer’s ♣K is trapped, and the defense will eventually get two club tricks, defeating the contract.”