

## SUMMARY

### They open the bidding

*Simple overcalls of their 1 level opening in a suit*

#### *Minimum Requirements for overcall*

Always a 5+ card suit

At one level: Opening points or 9-11 HCP with 1+ plus feature

Plus feature is a good suit, a good 4+ card side suit, extra length in overcalled or side suit

At 2 level: 14+ HCP or 12-13 HCP and 1+ plus feature or 10-11 HCP and 2+ plus features

#### *Other considerations*

Vulnerable or not

Do you want your partner to lead the overcalled suit?

How much of the opponents' bidding space are you using?

Do you have lowly honours in short suits or their suit?

#### *Maximum hand for overcall*

About 17 HCP

#### *Advancing after overcall*

##### *3 card support*

6-10 TP: Single raise

11-13 TP: Jump raise

14+ TP: Cue bid (forcing)

3-8 HCP and 5 card support in major and singleton: bid game

##### *less than 3 card support*

8-10 HCP and stopper: 1NT

11-13 HCP and stopper: 2NT

7-13 HCP: New suit

14+ HCP: Cue bid or jump in a good suit (forcing)

#### *Overcaller's rebids*

Pass if game is unlikely

Bid game if game is likely

Invite game if game likely with a maximum

Bid a new suit with extra values (i.e. more HCP or new suit 5+ cards)

*Takeout double over 1 level opening in a suit*

#### *Minimum requirements for takeout double*

4+ cards in 2 unbid suits and 3+ cards in other and 11+HCP or

3+ cards in unbid suits and 14+ HCP or

Hand too strong to overcall or bid 1NT

#### *Advancing after takeout double when RHO passes*

You must bid something unless you have big holding in their suit

Bid best suit (not opener's suit) with 0-9 HCP; may be a 3 card suit if no other option

Jump in best (4+ card) suit, not opener's suit with 10-12 HCP (TP with 5+ card suit)

Bid game with 5+ card major suit (not opener's suit) and 13+ HCP or 6+ card suit weaker

Bid 1NT with 7-10 HCP, stopper, no 5+ card suit (other than opener's suit)

Bid 2NT with 11-12 HCP, stopper, no 5+ card suit (other than opener's suit)  
Bid 3NT with 13-15 HCP, stopper, no 5+ card suit (other than opener's suit)  
Cue bid opener's suit with 13+ HCP

#### *Doubler's rebids*

Pass if game unlikely  
Compete in advancer's suit if opponents bid if appropriate  
Invite game in advancer's suit if opponents bid and if game likely with maximum  
Bid game in advancer's suit if game likely  
Bid a new suit or cue bid opener's suit with a very strong hand

#### *Advancing after takeout double when RHO raises opener's suit*

You do not have to bid with a very weak hand  
Bid game with 5+ card major suit (not opener's suit) and 13+ HCP or 7+ card suit weak  
Bid a 4-5 card suit (not opener's suit) at 2 level with 6-9 HCP  
Bid a 4-5 card suit (not opener's suit) at 3 level with 8-12 HCP (10-12 HCP if jump)  
Need fewer HCP with a 6+ card suit  
Double with 9+ HCP and unsure of denomination  
Bid 2NT with 11-12 HCP, stopper, no 5+ card suit (other than opener's suit)  
Bid 3NT with 13-15 HCP, stopper, no 5+ card suit (other than opener's suit)  
Cue bid opener's suit with 13+ HCP

#### *Bidding after 1NT opening by opponents*

Double with more HCP than opener or 7+ tricks  
With a good 6 card suit or 5-4 distribution, you may bid your long suit if the total length of your two longest suits minus your losing trick count is 2 or more.

#### *Bidding after preempt by opponents*

Similar to bidding over 1 level opening, but more HCP and/or playing strength required the higher the level.  
Often you will need to choose between passing meekly or bidding when the level is uncomfortably high and either action could be right depending on other players' holding.  
Jump overcalls are strong not weak as they would be over 1 level openings.

#### *Weak jump overcalls*

##### *Requirements*

Good 6 card suit and about 6-10 HCP (mainly in long suit) at the 2 level  
Good 7 card suit and about 6-10 HCP (mainly in long suit) at the 3 level  
Be more cautious when vulnerable.

##### *Advancing*

Single raise: Weak, good support  
Jump to game: Either weak, 4+ card support, probably singleton or strong.  
New suit: Good suit, non-forcing  
Cue bid opponent's suit: strong, forcing

#### *1NT overcall of opponent's 1 level opening in a suit*

##### *Requirements*

16-18 HCP, balanced, stopper in opponent's suit  
More than 1NT opening; your partner won't have much and fairly likely to go down

Lower prospect for game than 1NT opening because fewer HCP between LHO and your partner

### *Advancing*

#### *2 level bids*

There is no Stayman and no transfer bids. All bids at 2 level weak.

Opener may only bid again with fabulous hand and fit (and only if pushed)

If RHO passes, 2NT is invitational to 3NT

If RHO bids, 2♦ or higher, 2NT is Lebensohl (see below)

#### *3 level bids*

All bids at 3 level show a 5+ card suit, nearly strong enough for game (+), forcing 3NT is to play there

#### *Lebensohl when RHO bids*

With a 6+ card suit of lower rank than the suit that the RHO bids and a weak hand where you would like to play at the 3 level

If LHO passes, your partner must bid 3♣.

You pass if your suit is clubs or correct to your suit if it is diamonds or hearts.

#### *Cue bids in the opponent's suit*

Need to have one or more 4 card major and enough HCP to invite game.

Opener bids 2NT or 3 of unbid major (shows 4 cards) with a minimum.

Opener bids 3NT or 4 of unbid major (shows 4 cards) with a maximum.

If there are 2 unbid majors, opener does not bid at 4 level with a maximum.

### *Michael's Cue Bid (Bid of opponent's suit at the 2 level)*

#### *Requirements*

Over 1 of a minor, shows at least 5-5 in the majors and 8-12 HCP

Over 1 of a major, shows 5 of the other major and 5 of a minor (either one) and 8-12 HCP

#### *Advancing options*

Sign off in your partner's major (a jump is weak and pre-emptive)

Bid 2NT over major suit cue bid and your partner will bid minor suit

Bid a minor suit with a long suit and no interest in your partner's suits

Bid 3NT to play over all cue bids or 2NT over minor cue bids (invitational to 3NT)

Cue bid opener's suit at 3 level with slam interest

### *Unusual No Trump (Jump to 2NT over RHO's opening at 1 level in a suit)*

#### *Requirements*

At least 5-5 in the two lower ranking unbid suits

#### *Advancing options*

Bid one of your partner's suits to play there

Bid the other suit with no interest in your partner's suits

Bid 3NT to play there

Bid opener's suit at 3 level with slam interest

## **We open the bidding**

## *Overcall of our 1 level opening*

### *Responding*

#### *Raising opener's suit*

Just the same as if there was no overcall

#### *Bid a new suit*

At the 1 level, just as if there was no overcall (forcing)

At the 2 level without a jump, should be a 5+ card suit and 8+ HCP (forcing)

#### *Negative doubles*

A double of a overcall is artificial and shows useful values, 4+ cards in at least one unbid major (both after 1♦ overcall of 1♣). There is no obvious alternative bid.

#### *Bid NT*

Bid 1 NT with 7-10 HCP and stopper in opponent's suit (not forcing)

Bid 2NT with 11-12 HCP and stopper in opponent's suit (not forcing)

Bid 3NT with 13-15 HCP and stopper in opponent's suit (not forcing)

#### *Strong hands*

Cue bid in opponent's suit shows a strong hand (with or without a fit, game forcing)

#### *Rebids by opener*

Bid as you would without the overcall if you can.

Over a negative double, bid as if your partner had 4 cards in the suit(s) shown and 6+ HCP

Cue bid the opponent's suit with game forcing values and no other obvious bid

## *Responding after takeout double of our 1 level opening*

#### *Raising opener's suit*

All raises show less than 11 TP; the higher the bid the more cards in opener's suit

#### *Bidding a new suit at the 1 level*

As if there was no double (forcing)

#### *Bidding a new suit at the 2 level*

5+ card suit, less than 10 HCP (not forcing)

#### *Bidding 1NT*

6-9 HCP, no support of biddable suit at 1 level (not forcing)

#### *Single Jump in a new suit*

At the 2 level, weak, long suit, obstructive (not forcing). Bid suit at 1 level if not weak.

At the 3 level, strong (game forcing) with 6+ card suit.

#### *Redouble*

10+ HCP. Hands where you have no 1 level bid available, not enough to jump to 3 level

#### *2NT showing support for opener's major*

3+ card support, 11+ TP (forcing). With a minimum, opener should bid 3 of the major.

### *Over overcalls of our 1NT opening*

Similar to advancing when we make a 1NT overcall

#### *Double for penalties*

This is one time where a double is natural with the intention of defending the contract doubled.

#### *2 level suit bids*

These are natural weak bids with 5+ card suit and no wish to bid any higher

#### *3 level suit bids*

These are natural bids with 5+ card suit, strong enough to force to game (9+ HCP).

#### *3NT or other bid of game*

To play in that contract. Bidding 4 of a major may be weak and distributional or strong.

#### *Lebensohl*

Bid 2 NT if you want to play in a suit lower than the overcaller's suit at 3 level

Opener must bid 3:clubs and you pass or correct to your suit

The full Lebensohl convention allows for other possible continuations after opener's 3♣.

#### *Cue bids*

9+ HCP. 4 cards in at least one unbid major. Opener bids 4 card major or 3NT

### *Over double of 1NT opening*

Pass if weak and no 5+ card suit

Bid a 5+ card suit at the 2 level if weak

With 8+ HCP, you may redouble or with 9+ HCP bid a 5+ card suit at the 3 level

Bid game in a suit if you think it will make or if you want to be obstructive

### **Both sides competing for a part score**

Be aware that going one down (or two down not vulnerable) in your contract scores better than the opponents making their part score contract above 2♥.

When both sides are bidding, you need to find a fit in order to compete beyond very low levels.

#### *Law of Total Tricks*

If both sides have a fit and approximately equal HCP, the total number of cards in each side's fit should equal the number of tricks you can make playing in your suit plus the number of tricks your opponents can make playing in their suit. For example, if your side has 8 hearts and your opponents have 9 spades, you expect that the number of tricks you make playing in hearts plus the number of tricks they make playing in spades should be 17. One possibility is that you can make 3♥ and the opponents can make 2♠.

This law is based on observation and is believed to be accurate about half the time. It helps you decide how high to compete.

With an 8 card fit, it is usually right to compete to the 2 level in a competitive auction with approximately half the HCP.

With an 9 card fit, it is usually right to compete to the 3 level in a competitive auction with approximately half the HCP.

With an 10 card fit, it is usually right to compete to the 4 level in a competitive auction with approximately half the HCP.

Be less competitive with strength or length in the opponent's suit or if the opponents have not found a fit.

#### *Additional valuation ideas*

The quality of your fit is very important if you are venturing higher than your HCP suggest you should go.

A second suit with high cards is more valuable if you are playing the contract (and can use trumps to keep control while you are establishing the suit) than if the opponents play the suit (they just trump your long suit cards if you do get to establish them).

High cards in the opponent's suit are less valuable than high cards in our suit or a side suit. We may be able to win tricks with small cards in a long suit if we are able to drive out the opponents' high cards, but this is very unlikely to happen in the opponents' suit.

#### *Game try doubles*

When both sides have found a fit and both sides are bidding (e.g. in a bidding sequence like: 1♠ - 2♥ - 2♠- 3♥), we need to be able to distinguish between a raise that suggests going to game with a maximum and a raise based purely on the desire to compete at that level (e.g. bidding 3♣ in the previous example; is it a game try asking you to bid game with a maximum or is it simply based on the expectation that we will score better playing in 3♣ than letting the opponents play in 3♥). Use the convention that, after this or a similar sequence where both sides have shown a fit, a double is an artificial game try and asks your partner to bid game with a maximum and return to your suit at the lowest level with a minimum. For example, 1♠ - 2♥ - 2♠- 3♥ - X is a game try, while 1♠ - 2♥ - 2♠- 3♥ - 3♣ is purely competitive and not invitational.

#### **Balancing**

In the pass out position (i.e. after two passes, so if you pass, the auction is over) where your opponents have found a fit or limited their strength, consider bidding with values less than normal. If you can find a fit, you may make your contract, force the opponents to a higher level (say the 3 level) where they may go down, or go down with a better score than you would have got if they made their contract. On the other hand, your score may be worse. You may go down when your opponents would also go down. You may go down too many (e.g. two down vulnerable or three down not vulnerable). The opponents may bid to a better contract and make it.