



LESSON 12 - STUDENT NOTES

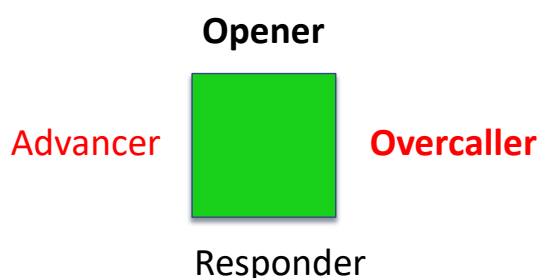
COMPETITIVE (OR INTERFERENCE) BIDDING

1. SUIT OVERCALLS

When one of the opponents open the bidding and then you bid, you are an **Overcaller**. This term refers only to the first such bid. The Overcaller's partner is the **Advancer**.



Names for Bidders at the Table



The first person to make a Positive Bid is the **Opener**

Partner to the Opener is the **Responder**

The first Opponent to make a positive bid after a bid(s) by the opening side is the **Overcaller**

Partner to the Overcaller is the **Advancer**

NB Nothing to do with seating direction!



As an **Overcaller**, your aims (and requirements) are different from that of an Opener.

You are aiming to:

- Obstruct the opponents!
- Suggest a lead to partner
- Win the contract (generally a part score contract)

You MUST have FIVE+ cards in a suit to make a Suit Overcall

Bernard McGee an expert bridge player and teacher writes:

“When contemplating an overcall your aims (and requirements) are different to that of an Opener. **You should not simply count points or playing tricks, but judge how useful your overcall might be, by using these four factors:**

(1) COMPETITION - with opening strength in your hand, you want to bid to find out if our side might have the majority of the points - as well as pushing the opponents up a little.

Example - ♠KJ, ♥QJ965, ♦K53, ♣A76 – You can Overcall 1♥

(2) SACRIFICE - a hand that can make a lot of tricks with one suit as trumps, but very few otherwise, is suitable for a sacrifice as long as we discover partner has some support. But if we never overcall, we will never find out!

Example - ♠QJT964, ♥43, ♦JT43, ♣A5 - makes lots of tricks if spades are trumps, but none if hearts are trumps.

(3) DISRUPTION - sometimes it can be right to bid simply to get in the opponent's way; this is especially true when holding the spade suit, for we can often cut out responder's easiest bid. This type of bid is made to use up the opponent's space.

Example - Over 1♣ by Opener, an Overcall of 1♠ would be disruptive (skipping 1♦ & 1♥).

(4) LEAD and SUIT QUALITY - When you bid a suit, your partner will almost always lead it, so make sure you have a strong suit, or one that you particularly want led. You can use this to your advantage, by making a bid so that your partner will make the right lead.

Example – ♠432, ♥KQJT9, ♦A32, ♣63 - a heart lead is likely to be best against any contract.

WHAT ELSE HELPS US TO MAKE UP OUR MIND?

(5) VULNERABILITY and POSITION - we can be a lot more daring when the vulnerability is right - i.e. favourable or **Non-Vulnerable** - at which time the penalties we might give away will be much smaller!

Position can also be a factor - sitting over the opener is much better than sitting beneath - in the former case your finesses are likely to be successful, but in the latter, they are likely to fail.

(6) SPADES - the spade suit is very important in bridge because being the highest ranking suit it can win an auction at the lowest level - if you have spades think about that as a positive factor.

SO, USE THE ABOVE 6 FACTORS TO DECIDE WHETHER TO OVERCALL OR NOT –

CONSIDER NOT JUST ONE OF THEM, BUT ALL OF THEM TOGETHER.

Let's consider these 6 factors in relation to 2 hands. Should you overcall or not in example a) and example b) below.

Hand a) After a 1♣ opening bid on your right:

You have the hand below holding 5 cards in spades & 8 points

Your hand	Thoughts	Overcall?
♠ AK954	1) Weak so NOT strictly competitive	NO
♥ 532	2) Points in overcall suit (so little defence)	YES
♦ J74	3) Skips 1♦ and 1♥	YES
♣ 94	4) Spade lead would be good	YES
	5) Non vulnerable	YES
You are Non Vulnerable	6) You have the Spade suit	YES

a) Lots of YES's so Overcall 1♠

Hand b) After a 1♦ opening bid on your right:

You have the hand below holding 5 cards in hearts & 10 points

Your hand	Thoughts	Overcall?
♠ Q5	1) Nearly opening points	½ YES
♥ JT984	2) Good suit? Points in suit?	NO
♦ 63	3) Skips a bid?	NO
♣ AK32	4) Heart lead good? (♣ better)	NO
	5) Non vulnerable	YES
You are Non Vulnerable	6) You don't have the Spade suit	NO

b) Only 1 and a half YES's so Pass. Do NOT Overcall 1♥

So, you can see that we look at all the aspects together and although hand (a) is somewhat weaker than the other it is much more suitable for an Overcall. Sometimes one aspect of the hand can sway us one way or the other.

If Hand (b) above had 15 points rather than 10 we would certainly want to bid because with so many points our side may have the majority of points.”

So, you can **overcall** if you have a **good 5+ card suit** and with **as few as 8 points**.

Points aren't so important for an **overcall** but you do need a **good 5+ card suit**.

♠987
♥AK983
♦J72
♣87
South

East opens 1♣

What should South do?

South has a **GOOD** 5 card ♥ suit
Only 8 points.

South should **Overcall** 1♥

SUIT OVERCALL RULES

- At the 1 level, **MUST** be a good 5+ card suit, and 8+ points
- At the 2-level **MUST** be a good 5+ card suit and 10+ points

WHAT IS A GOOD SUIT?

Here is a way of judging whether to overcall or not called the **Suit Quality Overcall Test (SQOT)** and is used in **addition** to all the other requirements for an overcall, not instead of them.

To use the SQOT add the number of cards in your suit i.e. 5+ cards, to the

number of honour cards in that suit. The total number suggests the number of tricks you can make and so the level of the overcall you can make. (Honour cards are AKQJT (including the 10)).


SQOT = 6 Don't overcall

SQOT = 7 Could overcall at the 1-level

SQOT = 8 Could overcall at the 2-level, overcall at the 1-level if available.


Overcall or Not?

<p>♠ KQ642</p> <p>♥ 85</p> <p>♦ 96</p> <p>♣ AQ83</p> <p>South</p>	<p>East opens 1♥</p> <p>What should South do?</p> <p>South has a GOOD 5 card ♠ suit (at least two honours in the suit) meeting the SQOT.</p> <p>South must overcall 1♠</p>
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Overcall or Not?

<p>♠ A765</p> <p>♥ J5</p> <p>♦ AJ</p> <p>♣ Q5432</p> <p>South</p>	<p>East opens 1♦</p> <p>What should South do?</p> <p>South has an Opening Hand BUT a terrible suit ... DO NOT BE TEMPTED to Overcall 2♣ (NB Does not meet SQOT)</p> <p>South must Pass</p>
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Always consider **vulnerability** when overcalling. In other words, be aware that the score for failing to make your overcalled contract will be greater if you are **vulnerable** than if you are **non-vulnerable**.

However, when you are **non-vulnerable** and the opponents are **vulnerable** 'going down' may give the opponents fewer points than they would have got if they bid and actually make a game contract! Do the maths!

RESPONDER: COPING WITH AN OPPONENT'S SUIT OVERCALL


If you can make the bid, you were going to make as responder to opener, do it!

Ignore the overcall!

So, support partner when you have a suit fit, bid your own suit as you planned, but if you planned to respond 1NT, you **MUST** now have a 'stop' in the overcalled suit.

How should Responder deal with Interference?

S	W	N	E	After the overcall what does N bid with these hands?
1♥	1♠	?		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>a) ♠762 ♥K873 ♦AQT3 ♣T2</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: small;">With an 8+ card heart suit fit, 9HCP and LTC score of 8 you were going to raise to 3♥ You still can Bid 3♥</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>b) ♠762 ♥T83 ♦AQT3 ♣KJ5</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: small;">Without four card support for hearts and with 10 HCP and four diamonds you were going to bid 2♦ You still can. Bid 2♦</p> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <p>c) ♠KJ5 ♥T83 ♦AJT3 ♣762</p> <p style="color: blue; font-size: small;">No four card heart support. Only 9 HCP Too weak to bid diamonds at two level You were going to bid 1NT As you have a stopper in Spades you still can - Bid 1NT</p> </div> </div>				



GUIDELINES


- If your RHO Overcalls partner's opening bid this does not prevent you bidding the suit at the level you had planned - ignore the overcall and just bid it!
- If the overcall would force you to bid your new suit at the 2 level when you were planning a 1 over 1 bid, **you must have 10 HCP & a 5 card suit** before you can bid it.
- If you would have responded in NT (e.g. 1NT 6-9 HCP and no support) you can now only do so with a **stopper in the overcall suit**.
- If partner bid a major and you only have three card support, preferably headed by an honour, remember you have the option to raise partner's suit if there is no better bid open to you.

ADVANCER: REACTING TO PARTNER'S SUIT OVERCALL

1. BIDDING TO THE 'LEVEL OF THE FIT'

Examples of Raising Partner's Overcall

<p>♠ 92 ♥ AT4 ♦ QJ96 ♣ 9852</p>	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>W E</td></tr><tr><td>S</td></tr></table>	N	W E	S	<table border="0"><tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♦</td><td>1♥</td><td>P</td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">2♥ bid to the <i>level of the fit</i></td></tr><tr><td colspan="4">What should West do?</td></tr></table>	West	North	East	South		1♦	1♥	P	2♥ bid to the <i>level of the fit</i>				What should West do?			
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What should West do?																					



If you hold 3+ cards in partner's overcalled suit you have a 'fit'.

Bidding to the '**Level of the Fit**' can make life difficult for the opponents. Combined trump length gives the maximum bid level.

Without a fit in partner's overcalled suit in most cases you will simply Pass, BUT with a good 5+ card suit of your own, and around opening points, you can choose to bid your own suit.

So, a:

Pass denies a fit

Bid to the 'level of the fit' shows a weaker hand and the number of combined cards in the overcalled suit

- **Single raise** shows 3 card support and limited values
- **Jump raise** shows 4+ card support to the '**level of the fit**' No game interest

Change of suit denies a fit with the overcalled suit and shows an alternative good 5+ card suit

It is important to bid if you possibly can to make life difficult for your opponents.

It is the trump suit that matters - the better the fit, the higher you can bid!

But, as **Advancer** (partner to Overcaller), what can you do if partner makes a suit overcall and you hold a good hand? Might there be a game your way? Firstly, you need to find out more about strength of Overcaller's hand. To do this you can use the Unassuming Cue Bid!

2. THE UNASSUMING CUE BID (UCB) RESPONSE

If you as Advancer hold 10+ points and 3+ card support, you may think there is a game your way? You need to find out the strength of overcaller's hand.

This involves bidding the suit bid by the opposition at the lowest level - and asks partner who made the Overcall, "How good is your overcall?"

To use the **UCB**, Advancer **MUST** have 3+ card support AND 10+ points.

The **UCB** is a **Conventional** bid. It must be **Alerted** by partner.


Overcaller will rebid his suit if weak and bid Game if strong.

Remember, the **UCB** is NOT a natural bid and must be **Alerted**.

The Unassuming Cue Bid (UCB)

What should W bid after E overcalls?

<p>♠ K87 ♥ 8542 ♦ A53 ♣ J62</p>	<p>N W E S</p>	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">West</td> <td style="text-align: left;">North</td> <td style="text-align: left;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♥</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>If Vulnerable, with such a weak, flat hand you might consider 2♥</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">West</td> <td style="text-align: left;">North</td> <td style="text-align: left;">East</td> <td style="text-align: left;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Make a UCB With 11 points and a fit</p>	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♥	P	3♥				West	North	East	South		1♠	2♦	P	2♠			
West	North	East	South																							
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	1♠	2♦	P																							
2♠																										
<p>♠ 92 ♥ AT74 ♦ K96 ♣ A983</p>	<p>N W E S</p>																									



OVERCALLER HAS 2 OPTIONS AFTER ADVANCER MAKES A UCB

- 1 If weak, no chance of game, rebid his overcalled suit at the lowest level
- 2 If strong (with Advancer's 10+ points), rebid game in his overcalled suit.

SUMMARY OF SUIT OVERCALLS

- 3 Reasons: **Disruption**, **Lead suggestion**, **To play**
- Requires: a **GOOD 5+ cards** which meets the **SQOT**
- Options for Advancer to Suit Overcaller: **Pass**, **Bid to the 'Level of Fit'**, but with **3+ card support** and **10+ points** make an **UCB**.
- Coping with Opponent's Suit Overcalls: Make your intended bid if you can; Bid NT with a stop in the overcalled suit; A '2 over 1' change of suit is a Forcing Bid
- Options for Overcaller after a UCB by Partner: Rebid overcalled suit if weak; Bid to Game if strong.

The benefit of Overcalling!

Hand 1 (South):
 ♠ J T 3
 ♥ Q J T 9 8
 ♦ 5 4
 ♣ A 7 2
 8 HCP

Hand 2 (North):
 ♠ 7 4
 ♥ A 4 2
 ♦ A 7 2
 ♣ J T 9 6 3
 9 HCP

Hand 3 (East):
 ♠ K Q 9 5 2
 ♥ K 7 5
 ♦ 9 3
 ♣ 8 5 4
 8 HCP

Hand 4 (West):
 ♠ A 8 6
 ♥ 6 3
 ♦ K Q J T 8 6
 ♣ K Q
 15 HCP

Bidding:

	S	W	N	E
1♦		P	1♥	1♠ Overcall
3♦		P	3♥	P
3NT		End		

Without the overcall West would lead ♣J - top of a sequence 3NT by N/S would make!


After partner's overcall West leads ♠7 to ♠T and partner's ♠Q South ducking correctly

East needs to put West back on lead and on the bidding & looking at Dummy finds the ♥5 switch

West wins ♥A and leads ♠4 to ♠J Partner's ♠K and South's ♠A

South must knock out the ♦A won by West who knows to lead a ♥ won by East's ♥K who then plays 3 winning ♠ 3NT contract goes down -3! All because of East's **Overcall!**

Cards played are in grey



Five is the key number!

MUST have a 5+ card suit to Overcall
MUST be a 'GOOD' 5 card suit i.e. one that meets SQOT
Advancer should support with 3+ cards

Law of total Tricks: The number of tricks for each side is equal to the number of combined trumps.

i.e. You know partner always Overcalls with 5 cards so add yours to his and bid to the level of the fit. This is the Law of Total Tricks.

If both sides have an 8-card fit, it's always right to go to the 3 level!

	Opener	Overcaller	Responder	Advancer
e.g. if the bidding goes	1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
It's always correct to go to the 3 level				

If 2♥ makes, the overcalling side score -110

If 2♠ goes down 1 (-50/-100 depending upon vulnerability) it's still a better score for the overcalling side than -110.

BUT if 2♠ can't make, then the law of total tricks says 3♥ will make!

BUT if you know that you and your partner hold nine spades, you will be safe to compete to 3♠. It does not necessarily mean that you will make the contract - although you may do so – it merely indicates that even if you are doubled in this contract you are unlikely to lose more points than if you had left the opponents to play in their contract.

The principle assumes equal or favourable vulnerability and also depends on both sides playing and defending the contract perfectly which, of course, is not always possible!