



Overcalls

An overcall is a bid made over an opening bid by an opponent and needs to be at least a 5 card suit. It is a **competitive bid**. When both sides are involved in the bidding we call it a **competitive auction**.

Playing Tricks

Playing tricks in a suit are tricks you can make without partner's help - provided your suit is trump

Eg ♠ AQJ1076 If spades are trump this hand will almost certainly make 5 spade tricks plus ♥A
♥ A76
♦ 95 We say it has 6 playing tricks in spades
♣ 53

An overcall in a suit is based on Playing Tricks, not High Card Points and requires at least 5 cards. Long solid suits guarantee a number of playing tricks – high cards do not.

<i>To Open the Bidding – Count Points; To Overcall – Count Playing Tricks</i>

Overcalls in a suit

When an opponent opens you can overcall a higher-ranking suit at the 1-level:

over 1♦ you can overcall 1♥ or 1♠, but to bid clubs you have to go to the 2-level.

Just as a response at the 2-level needs to be stronger than a response at the 1-level, so an overcall at the 2-level is stronger than an overcall at the 1-level

An overcall at the 1-level shows 4/5 playing tricks and at least 5 cards

An overcall at the 2-level (not a jump) shows 5/6 playing tricks and at least 5 cards

The Jump Overcall

A jump overcall is an overcall made one level higher than necessary.

It shows a hand with a reasonably good 6+card suit providing playing tricks, about (5 – 10) hcp and is pre-emptive.

When considering an overcall we take account of:

the **level** at which we must bid: *the higher the bid the greater the values*

and the **vulnerability**: *we are more circumspect when vulnerable*

we want to avoid incurring a penalty higher than the value of openers score

The 1NT overcall

Over an opening bid of 1 of a suit you can overcall 1NT.

This is based on High Card Points, not Playing Tricks.

It is stronger than a 1NT opener, and must have at least one stopper in opponent's suit

An overcall of 1NT shows 15-18 HCP in a balanced hand with a stopper in the suit opened

We respond to an overcall of 1NT just as we would to an opening bid: natural raises, stayman, transfers .