



Lesson 34 Teacher's Notes

Defensive Bidding

Aims

- To revise the basic principles of overcalling
- To expand them to cover more situations.

Content

- 1 Point out the dangers of overcalling: the side that opens the bidding has the advantage of knowing a lot about their combined strength and may be able to take a large penalty.
But we have to take some risks in case it is our hand, and a long strong suit is a safety factor.
Revise the concept of **Playing Tricks** – tricks we expect to make if allowed to play in our best suit.
To open the bidding – Count points; To overcall – Count Playing Tricks
- 2 Examine types of hand on which we want to bid when opponents have already opened the bidding
 - A) We have opening strength, 12+ HCP. We can compete in one of these ways:
 - With a long strong suit we can **overcall**, showing 4+ PT at the 1-level 5+PT at the 2-level
 - With a good 6+card suit we can make a **jump overcall**, to show 6+Playing Tricks
 - With no long, strong suit we make **a takeout double**, asking partner to bid his longest suit
 - With 15-18 HCP in a balanced hand **and a stopper in opponent's suit** we can bid **INT**
 - B) We have less than opening strength.
Now we bid only with a long strong suit, and enough playing strength for an overcall.
Note that sometimes we **pass** with opening strength *because we have no good bid to make*,
and sometimes we **bid** with less than opening strength *because we have a good suit*
- 3 Introduce **The Rule of Two and Three**
The idea is that you need enough playing strength to avoid a penalty of more than 500,
which is 2 down Vulnerable, 3 down Nonvulnerable
So we need more playing strength for a vulnerable overcall: 5PT at the 1-level, 6PT at the 2-level
Nonvulnerable we can afford to fall **three** tricks short of our target and can bid with 4 and 5PT.
- 4 *Discuss what happens when opponents open INT.*
The same principles apply, you still need a good suit and 6+ playing tricks to overcall at the 2-level.
But we do not overcall in no-trump with a strong balanced hand– it would be silly to try to play 2NT
Instead we double for **penalties** – you cannot make a takeout double when no suit has been bid.



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- 5 *Introduce the '**sandwich' position** when both opponents have bid.*
When we are sandwiched between two opponents well-informed about their combined strength and suit length bidding is very dangerous: We should still bid if we have enough playing strength, but we must stick fast to the Rule of Two and Three.
- 6 Discuss **responses to overcalls**.
Since partner promises at least a 5-card suit **we can (and should) raise with 3-card support** and the same sort of values as we need to raise an opening bid.
Partner has a good suit, so we do not introduce a new suit with a weak hand, we just pass.
A new suit is not forcing, but it is **constructive** – it says we may have game if partner can raise.
- 7 Revise **coping with overcalls**.
If we can make the bid we would have made without the overcall – we do that
If the overcall forces us to bid at the 2-level instead of the 1-level we need 10+points and 5+ cards.
(A new suit is forcing for one round after the overcall, just as it was without one.)
(Note: *We need extra points and length to bid at the 2-level because partner's rebid will take us quite high. For the same reason, when we respond 2♥ to 1♠ we promise **five** cards, not just four. We can bid two of a minor with 4-cards, because partner has room to rebid hearts cheaply*)
If we have a balanced hand we can bid no-trump – but only with a **stopper** in opponent's suit.
Our 1NT bids are slightly stronger (8-10HCP) – with a minimum weak response we can pass.
Partner has another chance to bid, so we do not need to keep the bidding open for him.