



# The Competitive Auction

When the other side opens the bidding they have a tactical advantage.

It is risky to bid: you may go down a lot. It is equally risky not to bid: you may miss a good contract.

**When they open one of a suit** your options are:

<b>Overcall</b>	The cheapest possible bid in a new suit
<b>Jump overcall</b>	A weak jump bid in a new suit
<b>1NT Overcall</b>	
<b>Takeout double</b>	
<b>Pass</b>	

## The 1NT Overcall

Just like a 1NT opening bid, but stronger, 15-18HCP. *And it promises a stopper in the suit opened.*  
 (To prevent opponents from cashing 5 or 6 tricks) *With no stopper make a takeout double instead.*

**Respond to a 1NT overcall** just as you do to an opening bid of 1NT, using Stayman and Transfers.  
 The only difference is arithmetical: invite game with 8-9HCP, and bid it with 10+.

## Overcalls in a Suit

**A simple overcall** (a new suit at the minimum level) promises at least a 5-card suit.

To decide whether to overcall or not *we count Playing Tricks, not points.*

**Playing Tricks (PT)** are an estimate of the number of tricks we will make with our best suit as trump

♠87	♠KJ10963	♠6	♠KQ74
♥KQJ92	♥5	♥109	♥Q105
♦A863	♦AQ7	♦AKQ109853	♦AJ3
♣53	♣976	♣62	♣J65
With ♥s trump you have	4½ trump tricks	8 trump tricks in ♦s	Balanced hands have
4 trump tricks plus ♦A	1½ tricks in ♦s	No outside tricks	very few playing tricks
5 Playing Tricks	6 Playing Tricks	8 Playing Tricks	3? Playing Tricks

We may overcall with *less than an opening bid* if we have a good suit, and therefore a lot of Playing Tricks  
 And sometimes we cannot overcall with a hand worth an opening bid *because we do not have a good suit*

## The Rule of Two and Three

This is a guideline to help you decide whether to overcall or not.

If you are doubled for penalties you hope to lose no more than 500 points: that is 2 down when Vulnerable  
 3 down when nonvulnerable.

**An overcall at the 1-level** needs 4+ Playing Tricks when not vulnerable; 5+ when vulnerable

**An overcall at the 2-level** needs 5+ Playing Tricks when not vulnerable; 6+ when vulnerable

## Jump Overcalls

These are a bid of a new suit made a level higher than necessary.

They are often stronger in playing strength than simple overcalls. They promise a good 6+card suit, similar to a weak two opening bid. They are also based on Playing Tricks – usually 6+



## The Competitive Auction

### The Sandwich Position

When LHO opens the bidding, partner passes and RHO replies you may still want to overcall. You should be slightly stronger than minimum in this 'sandwich' position, but there is little risk provided you have a good suit.

♠KQ10654  
♥62  
♦KQ3  
♣53

6 PT and a nice suit  
A 1♠ overcall whether  
vulnerable or not.  
Also after 1♦-Pass-1♥

♠K1093  
♥AQ5  
♦KJ76  
♣A6

A normal 1NT overcall  
(Do not overcall 1NT in  
the sandwich position)

♠96  
♥K54  
♦KQ109876  
♣2

6+ PT and a good suit  
A weak jump overcall  
anywhere.

♠AJ984  
♥K54  
♦K632  
♣4

4½ PT. Overcall 1♠ non-  
vulnerable but not in the  
sandwich position