

Dealing with Overcalls: Part 5

Preemptive Overcalls

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- 1 The Situation: Partner opens 1 of a suit. RHO makes a jump overcall. Ex.: 1♥-2♠.**
 - 1.1 What has been lost?
 - 1.1.1 A lot of bidding room. It is extremely difficult to show both strength and support. The cue bid is often too high for an invitational hand.
 - 1.1.2 Conventions: Jacoby 2NT, Bergen Raises (maybe), Drury.
 - 1.2 What has been gained?
 - 1.2.1 The knowledge that RHO probably has six spades and a fairly weak hand.
 - 1.2.2 Double, the cue bid, and 2NT need to be defined.
- 2 Double is negative, or is it?**
 - 2.1 The top left section of the convention card designates the maximum level at which doubles are considered negative. The most common level is 3♠.
 - 2.2 Obviously, doubling at higher levels requires more strength.
- 3 What does a cue bid at the three-level mean?**
 - 3.1 It certainly shows game-going strength.
 - 3.2 If you use it to show support for partner's suit, you should have clear agreements on how much length and how many points.
 - 3.3 Some play it as a Western Cue Bid, asking the opener to bid 3NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit.
 - 3.4 Some play it as ambiguous. Opener should bid 3NT with a stopper, but responder might bid on with something else in mind.
- 4 What does 2NT mean?**
 - 4.1 If you have not discussed it with partner, it is a proposal to play 2NT (or higher).
 - 4.1.1 If partner opened a major, it denies support.
 - 4.1.2 It denies four pieces in the unbid major, if any.
 - 4.1.3 It affirms good stoppers in the opponent's suit.
 - 4.1.4 The magic number for 2NT is 23 high-card points. So, responder needs 10-11.
 - 4.2 Some experts think that there is a better use for this bid: Good-bad 2NT.
 - 4.2.1 Direct bids at the three-level show extras.
 - 4.2.2 2NT asks opener to bid 3♣. Since this bid can be passed, opener can break the relay.
 - 4.2.3 The responder's second bid shows length with weakness.
- 5 Bidding over a 3-level or higher preempts requires considerable strength.**

Next week: Dealing with doubles.