

Two Suited Overcalls – Michaels and the unusual NT

NB: there are different versions of these conventions, so Partnership Agreement is essential. This note shows one possible variations of each convention – let’s discuss whether it works for you. There are other conventions such as Ghesten (not covered here). **Landy** (2♣ overcall over 1NT to show 5-4 in the majors) is more commonly used but is not covered here.

These conventions are used when partner has not bid other than PASS. They are artificial so must be responded to, and must be alerted. **FORCING** **ALERTABLE**

<p>Michaels:</p> <p>Bid 2 of the enemy’s suit (ie N: 1♠ E: 2♠)</p> <p>If cue bidding enemy’s minor suit, it means “I have 5-5 in the majors”.</p> <p>If cue bidding enemy’s major suit, it means “I have the OTHER major and an unspecified minor.”</p>	<p>Unusual NT:</p> <p>Jump to 2NT over opposition suit bid(s) at 1 level</p> <p>ie: N: 1♠ E: 2NT</p> <p>It means: “I am 5-5 in the LOWEST 2 unbid suits.”</p> <p>Exception: 1♣ - 1NT 2NT (=♥+♦)</p>																
<p>Point count:</p> <p>no min or max, but points should be predominantly in long suits</p> <p>NB! Take vulnerability into account</p>	<p>Alternative:</p> <p>6-10 or 16+, indicated by rebid [Kambites prefers use of suit bid for intermediate hands]</p>																
<p>Hand 1 - South</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ A 10 9 8 5</td> <td style="width: 50%;">W: - N: -</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ K Q 4 3 2</td> <td>E: 1♣ S: 2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ 4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ 8 2</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	♠ A 10 9 8 5	W: - N: -	♥ K Q 4 3 2	E: 1♣ S: 2♣	♦ 4		♣ 8 2		<p>Hand 2 - South</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">♠ 7</td> <td style="width: 50%;">W: 1♣ N: -</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♥ A 9 8 3 2</td> <td>E: 1NT S: 2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>♦ A J 8 4 2</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>♣ J</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	♠ 7	W: 1♣ N: -	♥ A 9 8 3 2	E: 1NT S: 2NT	♦ A J 8 4 2		♣ J	
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If **both opponents have each bid a different suit** at 1 level, best to agree to use Michaels cue bid to show 5-5 in other 2 suits (Unusual NT will take up more bidding space). Note a X instead of Michaels would imply 12+ pts and <5 card suits.

If bidding over an **artificial minor** (eg a ‘short club’), you need partnership agreement as whether to use Michaels / UnNT, and whether to assume the artificial bid is natural, or not, for the purposes of your cue bid. So: 1♣ (“could be short”) – 2NT could mean ♥-♦ (assume ♣ is natural) OR ♦-♣ (not natural).

Response to Michaels

Partner usually bids the suit that he has the most tolerance for. With equal length in both suits, especially with two doubletons, she bids the cheaper suit.

Example responses:

Lowest possible bid

- Other minor Natural. 6+ minor. Denies 3 card support in partner’s major.
- Major 3 card support; non-forcing sign-off.
- Cue bid (3 level) Game try in one of partner’s suits. **FORCING**. Partner exits at cheapest level, bids game in preferred suit or cue bids at 4 level to accept game try in either suit.

Jump

- other minor Forcing. Stronger than 2 (other minor)

Major Pre-emptive.

Other

2NT Natural. Inviting to 3NT.

3NT Big balanced hand with no interest in major suit game.

Jump to game or Blackwood with slam interest – remember Michaels cue bidder may have ‘nul points’ according to partnership agreement.

Alternative: 4NT with support in both minors, 4NT asks for better minor at game level.

Hand 3

♠ A Q 8 5 2	♠ 7 4
♥ K 10 7 5 2	♥ Q J 9
♦ J 2	♦ A 9 7 4
♣ 5	♣ Q 9 7 3



West	North	East	South
2♦	Pass	2♥	1♦

Hand 4 - Responder:

♠ 9 7
♥ J 9 6 3
♦ K Q 7 2
♣ K J 6

1♦ 2♦ - 2♥
Intermed. Points but in wrong places so weak response

Hand 5 - Responder:

♠ K J 10 7
♥ J 10
♦ A Q 10
♣ A J 10 6

1♥ 2♥ - 3♥
- 3/4♠ or even 4♦/♣ or 4NT

Hand 6 - Responder:

♠ J 10
♥ A K 10 8
♦ A Q J 9
♣ K Q 10

1♥ 2♥ - 2NT
- Pass / 3NT

Responding to Unusual NT

Partner usually bids the suit that he has the most tolerance for. With equal length in both suits, especially with two doubletons, she bids the cheaper suit.

Jump in one of partner's suits weak with 4 card support: pre-emptive

Cue bid the enemy's suit Good hand shows support for at least one of partner's suits, and interest in game or slam. **Forcing** for one round and asks the 2NT bidder to bid his cheapest suit at the cheapest level with a weak hand (around 0-10 points), or to make any other bid with a "fair" hand (around 10+ points).

4th suit natural and non-nforcing, 6+ cards, a decent hand, and **no** support for either of the 2NT bidder's suits.

Hand 7 - Responder:

♠ A Q 9 8 5
♥ J 7 4
♦ Q 8 5
♣ 7 6

1♦ 2NT - 3♥
Weak response with preference to ♥

Hand 8 - Responder:

♠ K J 9 7
♥ A 9 8 6 5
♦ 10 3
♣ 9 8

1♠ 2NT - 3♣
Weak response with no preference choose cheaper suit

Hand 9 - Responder:

♠ A J 8 7
♥ K Q 8
♦ 9 6
♣ 9 8 7 5

1♣ 2NT - 3♣
- 3♠/♥ if weak
4♠/♥ if 10+

Hand 10 - Responder:

♠ 6 5 4
♥ J 8 7 3
♦ K 9 8 4 2
♣ 3

1♠ 2NT 3♠ 5♦
Preempt against the probable 4♠ game.

Defence to Michaels

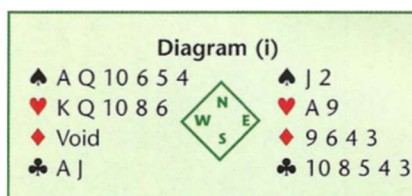
Double	interest in penalising either of opponents' suits. Note this is not a negative double.
Raise partner's suit	7-10 with a fit in partner's suit (ie 4 in ACOL or 3 majors in 5cm). Jump is pre-emptive.
Cue bid enemy's 1 st 'known suit'	Fording : limit raise or better in opener's suit.
Cue bid enemy's 2 nd 'known suit'	Fording : 10+ pts and 5+ cards in the fourth suit.

Opener's response is natural. A Cue bid of either enemy's suit asks for a stopper, in which case responder bids 3NT.

Defence to unusual NT - Unusual vs Unusual

Double	Natural with interest in penalizing the opponents in one of their suits.
3♣	A game-forcing hand in the unbid major (hearts if partner bid spades, and vice-versa). Forcing .
3♦	A limit raise or better in partner's suit. Forcing .
3♥	A constructive raise (7-10 points) opposite a 1 opening. A natural non-forcing bid opposite a 1 opening.
3♠	A constructive raise (7-10 points) opposite a 1 opening. A natural non-forcing bid opposite a 1 opening.

Michaels examples:

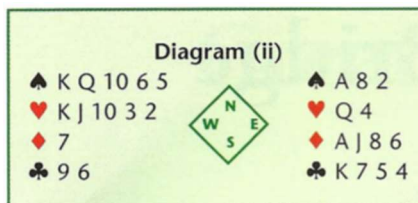


Auction 1

West	North	East	South
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Auction 2

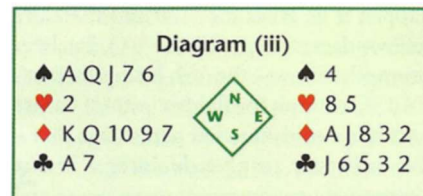
West	North	East	South
2♦	3♦	Pass	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass



West	North	East	South
2♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

West	North	East	South
2♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♠	All pass

Of course, if South opens 1♦ then West cannot show spades and clubs. That is a major disadvantage of Michaels compared to Ghestem.



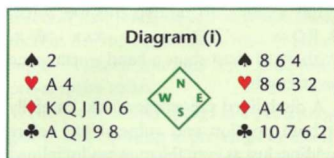
West	North	East	South
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♦	All Pass

2♥ shows spades and a minor suit, weak or strong. North's pass suggests to East that West may be strong. 2NT is preparing to sign off in the minor if West is weak. West shows he is strong by jumping to 4♦ and East raises to game.

West	North	East	South
2♥	4♥	4NT	1♥
5♦	All Pass		Pass

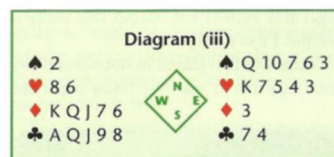
4NT asks for the minor. East knows that if West has the weak Michaels then 5♦ will be a cheap save against 4♥, whereas if West is strong 5♦ will probably make. West must not bid on to a slam just because he has the strong type.

Unusual NT examples:



West	North	East	South
2NT	Pass	3♣	1♠
3♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
			All Pass

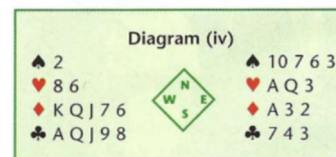
East knows that West will be weak or strong for 2NT (not intermediate). Initially he assumes West is weak. West's 3♥ shows a strong Unusual NT. The heart bid is also more flexible than 4♣, showing a heart feature and keeping the bidding below 3NT in case 3NT is the right contract.



West	North	East	South
2NT	Pass	3♣	1♠
?			Pass

If you have 11-15 pts and use Kambites' preferred suit bid, then:

W	N	E	S
			1♠
2♦	-	-	-



If you have 11-15 pts and use Kambites' preferred suit bid, then:

W	N	E	S
			1♠
2♦	-	-	-