

Stamford Bridge Club

3rd February 2016

The One No Trump Overcall

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Let's play Board 1

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Requirements for a 1N Overcall

- 15-18 high card points ("hcps")
- At least one stop in the opponents' suit
- A balanced hand

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15-18 hcps

We want to have a **reasonable expectation of holding over half the pack's points**

Experience and mathematics tells us that having a range that starts with fewer hcps will lead to trouble (where trouble = double)

(15-17 is an OK range too, if you prefer. When we look at Defence to Weak Twos we'll find there a natural overcall of 2N showing 15-18, so this range is the same so less memory strain)

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At least one stop

We don't want the opponents to run their suit thereby jeopardising our contract. Having stops, inevitably, will lessen that possibility.

Sure stops – A KQ QJ10

Double stop – AK KQJ QJ109

Stop and a half – AQ AJ10

Other good stop holdings – Q1092 KJ98, etc

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If holding a single stop (not ideal), consider making an alternative bid if available

e.g.

♠ A 2

♥ K Q 8 6

♦ A 10 9 2

♣ Q J 10

Left hand opponent opens 1♠. If partner has nothing in spades the defence will quickly run through that suit. We may have an alternative bid.

X is a better bid (obeys SOS principles and includes 4hearts to boot)

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Balanced hand

Common shapes 4432 4333 5332 – we have other ways of bidding unbalanced hands (suit overcalls to show 5+cards in suit), doubles for takeout

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How do we respond to the 1N overcall?

First we need to determine the level at which we'll play. Let's give the partner of the 1N bidder various hcp ranges:

0-7* Seek best part score

8-9 Make a game invitation

10+ Insist on game

(*yes, once in a while a 7 count may make game opposite 18)

Let's play Board 2

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Board 2 shows how we might deal with a hand where we'll play in no trumps.

What do we do when we may seek to play in a suit contract?

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Bridge is complex so we like to have **general rules that we can apply in similar situations.**

So when we respond to a 1N overcall we use the system bids that we use over an opening 1N – that clue should allow you to “solve”
Board 3

(But remember we are starting with 3 hcps more than for a 1N opening so your valuation opposite the 1N bidder is adjusted accordingly)

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So a response of 2♣ to a 1N overcall is

STAYMAN

Usually showing an invitational hand, or better, with at least one 4card major.

BUT **don't forget the weak variant** of Stayman

A very limited hand with 5/4majors. If overcaller bids 2major we're happy to have found a fit; if overcaller bids 2♦ we convert to our 5card suit

Let's try Board 4

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Continuing our theme of using similar bids over a 1N overcall as over an opening 1N - **we also use transfers into the majors**

Board 5 will show how this works

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Just as over a 1N opening, there is no lower limit for which transfers apply. They promise 5+cards in the next suit up and 0+hcps

Again we must judge the level at which we'll play - part score, game (or higher)

Board 6 provides another example

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When looking at responses to a 1N opening bid we added a few less common situations.

Try Board 7 and see if you reach a good contract opposite a 1N overcall.

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In summary

After partner has overcalled 1N (and assuming the next hand is silent), our available bids are:

- 2♣ Stayman - usually 8+ but might be 0-7 with 5/4majors
- 2♦ 0+hcps, 5+hearts
- 2♥ 0+hcps, 5+spades
- 2♠ 0-7, long minor (no 4card major)
- 2N 8-9, Game invitational, no major suit interest
- 3♣/) **Unlikely bids. These are slam tries**
- 3♦/) **after 1N opening. Here slam unlikely**
- 3♥/) **when opponents open the bidding**
- 3♠/)
- 3N To play
- 4maj To play

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BUT note the following:

- Don't bid their suit as a response to Stayman when holding 4cards there (gives oppos unnecessary info)
- Transfers into their suit are redundant bids (we won't play in their suit)

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We said we'd start our 1N range at 15 hcps to give us some protection. The bid is not always a winner. **We can be caught with a double on our left.**

We can seek sanctuary in a suit contract by using **Exit Transfers**. We did these with David (over an opening 1N bid).

Board 8 will provide a refresher

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The important point on Board 8 is **the ability to bale out to somewhere better** (not that the opponents then reach their optimum contract). We will have avoided a large penalty.

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A summary of exit transfers after the 1N overcall has been doubled

(1x) 1N (X) ?

XX	5+clubs
2♣	5+diamonds
2♦	5+hearts
2♥	5+spades

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Common Mistakes

- To be fixated on 1N being 12-14 because we learnt that as an opening bid. No, **we need to remember the overcall separately as 15-18.**
- Convention cards where, in the space for the **1N overcall, it says "15+"**. **Wrong** – there must be an upper limit else some games will be missed.

With 19+hcps we need to start with a double, one of the exceptions to our usual SOS rules (to be covered in a later workshop).

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A Proviso

You will see that all the examples feature a 1N overcall in the direct seat, that is, immediately after the opening bid.

If the bid is made after two passes (by an unpassed hand), the bid reverts to c. 12-14.

e.g. (1♣) Pass (Pass) 1N

This too will be covered in a later workshop.

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And let's finish by looking at a Hand from Hell

You pick up a good hand:

♠ K 2
♥ J 8 6
♦ A K 10 2
♣ K Q J 10

Your right hand opponent opens 1♥

You have some options. You can

- Pass (with so many points?)
- Bid 1N (where's the heart stop?)
- X for takeout (let's rule this out, no ♠ length)

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Here are two scenarios

(Talk Hand 1)

(Talk Hand 2)

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As with much bridge

There is no right answer

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Next week (Wednesday, 10th February)

**Supervised Play featuring some examples of
what we've covered today**