

## Suit Overcalls

<div><div><div>♠8532</div><div>♥Q93</div><div>♦K876</div><div>♣86</div></div><div><div>♠AQ106</div><div>♥1062</div><div>♦54</div><div>♣J952</div></div><div><div>♠J9</div><div>♥84</div><div>♦AQJ102</div><div>♣A1073</div></div><div><div>♠K74</div><div>♥AKJ75</div><div>♦93</div><div>♣KQ4</div></div></div>	<div>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td><td>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>1♠</td><td>2♥</td><td>All pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>South heart suit easily passes the Suit Quality Test (here suit length plus honours held sum to eight, one more than generally required for a one level overcall [less important when extra values held, as here]). North is minimum for the raise but competes safe in the knowledge of an eight card fit. South should pass as the king of spades is of dubious value, the suit having been bid on his left.</p> <p>2♥ should fail (losing three spades, two diamonds and a club) but that's all right as East West can make 2♦ or 2/3♣. The 2♥ bid has played a very useful role.</p>	West	North	East	South		Pass	1♦	1♥	1♠	2♥	All pass	
West	North	East	South										
	Pass	1♦	1♥										
1♠	2♥	All pass											
<div><div><div>♠K42</div><div>♥107</div><div>♦K1096</div><div>♣AQ103</div></div><div><div>♠Q10</div><div>♥Q53</div><div>♦AJ852</div><div>♣KJ7</div></div><div><div>♠J986</div><div>♥986</div><div>♦743</div><div>♣652</div></div><div><div>♠A753</div><div>♥AKJ42</div><div>♦Q</div><div>♣984</div></div></div>	<div>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>X<sup>1</sup></td></tr></table> <p><sup>1</sup> Takeout</p> <p>Well that's how the auction could go if West doesn't heed the use of the Suit Quality Test ("SQT") and isn't concerned about the balanced nature of the hand. West's hand has "defence" written all over it and it fails the SQT as the diamond suit gives a reading of seven (length plus honours) when a minimum of eight is needed for a two level overcall.</p> <p>North South will make a vulnerable game (3N or 4♥) but taking the non-vulnerable penalty from 2♦X is worth more. This should always fail by at least four tricks so West's indiscretion will cost 800/1,100, adequate compensation for any game contract.</p>	West	North	East	South	2♦	Pass	Pass	1♥	All Pass		Pass	X <sup>1</sup>
West	North	East	South										
2♦	Pass	Pass	1♥										
All Pass		Pass	X <sup>1</sup>										

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<div><div><div>♠A103</div><div>♥KQ107</div><div>♦AQJ4</div><div>♣72</div></div><div><div>♠QJ976</div><div>♥984</div><div>♦1092</div><div>♣54</div></div><div><div>♠42</div><div>♥A65</div><div>♦863</div><div>♣KQJ106</div></div><div><div>♠K85</div><div>♥J32</div><div>♦K75</div><div>♣A983</div></div></div>	<div>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3N</td><td>All pass</td><td>2N</td></tr></table> <p>North South reach the standard contract but East's overcall – minimum but easily meeting an SQT target of eight (here, nine [five card suit plus four honours]) – will defeat the contract. South is happy to bid no trumps hoping that ♠9 8 will provide a second stopper. That won't apply here.</p> <p>South can duck the opening lead of ♠5 and forlornly hope that West has the ace of hearts. Alas that card is (unsurprisingly) with East and the contract fails by one trick.</p> <p>Note that without the intervention West would probably lead a spade. Whether the lead is ♠Q or a fourth best ♠7 declarer will come to three spade tricks (♠10 being a winner now) and make eleven tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1♦	2♣	Pass	Pass	3N	All pass	2N
West	North	East	South										
Pass	1♦	2♣	Pass										
Pass	3N	All pass	2N										
<div><div><div>♠AK1032</div><div>♥9832</div><div>♦Q6</div><div>♣K5</div></div><div><div>♠5</div><div>♥AQ106</div><div>♦A10952</div><div>♣Q104</div></div><div><div>♠QJ87</div><div>♥KJ4</div><div>♦J7</div><div>♣J983</div></div><div><div>♠964</div><div>♥75</div><div>♦K843</div><div>♣A762</div></div></div>	<div>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</div> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1♦</td><td>1♠</td><td>1N</td><td>2♠</td></tr></table> <p>All pass</p> <p>North has an SQT value of eight (5card suit plus three honours) so the one-level overcall is clear-cut. East's 1N bid tells North South that the spade suit is breaking badly but South is right to compete, following a “support with support” mantra. The eight card fit is reached.</p> <p>One no trump will make for East West but can North bring in 2♠? Yes – North will win the probable diamond lead (or its continuation if West doesn't duck the opening lead) and play hearts so as to set up a ruff in that suit. The defence can switch to trumps but dummy will still have a spade remaining. Declarer will be able to take two top trumps, two clubs ruffed in hand, a heart ruffed in dummy, a diamond trick and the ace and king of clubs. Eight tricks and a successful outcome.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♦	1♠	1N	2♠				
West	North	East	South										
1♦	1♠	1N	2♠										

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<p>♠863 ♥A954 ♦7 ♣AKQJ5</p> <p>♠J94 ♥6 ♦QJ92 ♣109832</p> <p>♠AKQ10 ♥K8 ♦10643 ♣764</p> <p>♠752 ♥QJ10732 ♦AK85 ♣-void-</p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>1♠</td><td>2♥</td></tr><tr><td>2♠</td><td>4♥</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr></table> <p>East has a rare opportunity to overcall in a quality four card suit and this has a profound effect on the outcome of the standard 4♥ contract (as the partner of an overcaller you should always <i>assume</i> partner has five+ cards; that'll happen 95% of the time).</p> <p>West dutifully leads a spade and East can cash three rounds and sit back and wait for the king of trumps to take the setting trick.</p> <p>If East doesn't overcall West <i>could</i> guess to lead a spade but is more likely to start with ♦Q. Declarer wins in hand, ruffs a diamond and disposes of all three spade losers on the top clubs. A spade is ruffed to hand and ♥Q is finessed. This loses but there are twelve tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	2♥	2♠	4♥	All Pass					
West	North	East	South														
	1♣	1♠	2♥														
2♠	4♥	All Pass															
<p>♠7 ♥K1072 ♦A86 ♣K6543</p> <p>♠Q1053 ♥43 ♦J10932 ♣J9</p> <p>♠KJ94 ♥A ♦754 ♣AQ1087</p> <p>♠A862 ♥QJ9865 ♦KQ ♣2</p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td>1♣</td><td>1♥</td></tr><tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4♥</td></tr><tr><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <p>South has a decent suit and good shape and the overcall is automatic (SQT reading of eight). North has ten high card points, four card trump support and a potentially useful singleton. Raising to 2♥ would not do the hand justice (some ten counts may be OK for a single raise but that would only be right with a much flatter hand). The jump raise is in order.</p> <p>South's shape is sufficient to bid the game. West may start with ♦J which does declarer no harm. Declarer wins, unblocks the second diamond winner, cash ♠A and ruffs a spade. ♦A is cashed, throwing the club loser and declarer has now set the stage to cross ruff three clubs and two spades. The only loser is the ace of trumps. Clearly a club lead would have held the contract to one overtrick.</p> <p>If North wrongly raises to 2♥ East West have an easier entry to further competition and may reach a spade part score. Here 3♥ has served two purposes – it has allowed North South to reach game and has frozen the spade suit out for the opponents. If the opponents do get to 4♠ this should be doubled and best defence will take it two off for plus 500 to North South.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♣	1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass			
West	North	East	South														
		1♣	1♥														
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥														
All Pass																	

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<p>             ♠J109              ♥KJ1042              ♦86              ♣963           </p> <p>             ♠K76      ♠AQ532              ♥AQ853    ♥7              ♦1072     ♦954              ♣84        ♣A752           </p> <p>             ♠84              ♥96              ♦AKQJ3              ♣KQJ10           </p>	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>1♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>West just meets the SQT target of seven (five cards and two honours) and a similar statement can be made for East. East's change of suit denies a fit (three plus cards) in hearts and is not forcing. That said, West should compete over South's rebid to 2♠, bidding to the expected level of that fit (eight cards).</p> <p>North has no support for either of South's suits so East West buy the contract painlessly. There is a defence to this contract which requires South to cash the diamond winners, on the third of which North pitches a club. Declarer can no longer make a club ruff in dummy as North will be able to overruff. If North South don't follow this path there should be eight tricks – five spades, a heart, a club and a club ruff.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♥	Pass	1♠	1♦	2♠	All Pass		2♣
West	North	East	South										
1♥	Pass	1♠	1♦										
2♠	All Pass		2♣										
<p>             ♠KQJ109              ♥9              ♦J84              ♣Q965           </p> <p>             ♠753      ♠A8642              ♥AKJ432    ♥Q85              ♦AK        ♦952              ♣A3        ♣J2           </p> <p>             ♠-void-              ♥1076              ♦Q10763              ♣K10874           </p>	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1♥</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>North has few values but an excellent suit that obeys our now familiar test (here an SQT calculation of nine [five cards plus four honours]). 1N (after 1♠) works well for East but 2♥ is perfectly reasonable (just one spade stop, good trumps and a possible ruffing value in clubs).</p> <p>There is sometimes a price to be paid when we overcall but do not declarer the contract. In 4♥ with no overcall from North. North leads ♠K and we call for dummy's ace ... South ruffs and the roof falls in. We can no longer make the contract – there are now four losers.</p> <p>Now we'll play after the displayed auction. North's overcall has tipped us off to the very real possibility of a 5-0 spade break. We can now make a safety play of ducking the opening lead! We duck a further three times when North continues spades but we ruff the fourth round. We carefully draw three rounds of trumps ending in dummy. <b>Now</b> we can enjoy the ace of spades on which the club loser is thrown.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♥	1♠	2♥	All Pass	4♥	All Pass		
West	North	East	South										
1♥	1♠	2♥	All Pass										
4♥	All Pass												