

The One No Trump Overcall – Recap Talk

♠ Q 7 5
 ♥ A 10 9 7 4
 ♦ Q J 8 3
 ♣ A
 ♠ A J 4 3 ♠ K 2
 ♥ K Q ♥ J 8 6
 ♦ 6 5 ♦ A K 10 2
 ♣ 9 8 6 5 3 ♣ K Q J 10
 ♠ 10 9 8 6
 ♥ 5 3 2
 ♦ 9 7 4
 ♣ 7 4 2

Board 1 Scenario 1 (Talk) : Dealer North : Love all

West	North	East	South
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East overcalls 1N

	1♥	1N ⁽¹⁾	Pass
2♣ ⁽²⁾	Pass	2♦	Pass

3N
1 15-18, heart stop (?) 2 Stayman

East passes

1♥	All pass
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East has an unenviable choice. Here if he bids 1N he will have found the right time to strike with his flawed hand. Partner has sufficient to insist on game. East's paucity in the heart suit is more than made up by West's fortunate holding. There are always at least ten tricks (an eleventh may arise because a deep finesse towards ♦10 will work).

Had East passed – far from unreasonable – North would have played at the one level. 1♥ won't make but the undertrick score will be no compensation to East West for the missed game.

♠ Q 7 5
 ♥ A 10 9 7 4
 ♦ Q J 8 3
 ♣ A
 ♠ 10 9 8 6 ♠ K 2
 ♥ 5 3 2 ♥ J 8 6
 ♦ 9 7 4 ♦ A K 10 2
 ♣ 7 4 2 ♣ K Q J 10
 ♠ A J 4 3
 ♥ K Q
 ♦ 6 5
 ♣ 9 8 6 5 3

Board 1 Scenario 2 (Talk) : Dealer North : Love all

West	North	East	South
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East overcalls 1N

	1♥	1N ⁽¹⁾	X
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All pass

1 15-18, heart stop (?) 2 Stayman

East passes

	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	All pass	

We have a similar set up of the North and East cards but this time the South and West cards have been switched. Now, if East bids, he will come a cropper. South will double and West will have no mechanism to escape.

Let's say South leads ♥K against 1N doubled. He plays a second heart and switches to a club. North wins and cashes three further hearts. He can switch to a low spade and the defence can come to three spades. Together with five hearts and the ace of clubs, that's nine tricks. Declarer has been defeated by three tricks – minus 500 to East West.

So, with hindsight, East would have been better to pass. North South do have some chance of making 4♥ but they are quite likely to play in a part score. 2♠ can make nine tricks but North South will rue East's decision not to bid. Plus 140 is no substitute for the juicy penalty.