

Stamford Bridge Club

27th April 2016

Overcalling With Two Suited Hands

1

Let's play **Board 1**

2

So the recommended overcall with the North hand is 2N, called the **unusual 2N**. It is an example of a two suited overcall.

Generally

Over a 1level major suit opening, 2N shows both minors

(1♥) 2N Shows 5+diamonds and 5+clubs

and, similarly,

(1♠) 2N Also shows both minors
(at least 5/5)

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What criteria do we use for two suited overcalls?

At least 5/5 shape in two suits* (this will be written as 5/5 throughout)

*not the opened suit!

Wide ranging so no high card point (hcp) limit on them but **most overcalls fall in the range 9-15**

In common with other calls we like to have our **points in the long suits** (i.e. the suits we're showing).

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e.g.

♠	8 3
♥	2
♦	K Q J 10 9
♣	A Q 9 8 7

Good hand – points in long suits. Good for **OFFENCE** (i.e. playing the contract)

♠	A
♥	K Q
♦	10 9 8 7 6
♣	J 6 4 3 2

Poor hand – points in short suits. Good for **DEFENCE**

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Why use them?

Frequent

Give partner **two bites** of the cherry by showing two suits immediately

Apart from our own constructive bidding, we **put the opponents under pressure**. Often we preempt and force the other side to guess. They must make a bidding decision at a high level.

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A common mistake

With a two suited hand with **6/4 shape don't show it as a two suited overcall (bid the six card suit)**. You may end up playing in a 4-3 fit when you have a 6-2 fit

e.g.

♠	5
♥	8 6
♦	A Q J 10 6 5
♣	K Q 10 3

♠	Q 7 6 2
♥	A 9 5 2
♦	K 2
♣	8 6 2

Bidding 2N over 1major with the left-side hand will get the partnership to a silly 3♣ when 3♦ is better

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By the end of the morning we'll be able to show all 5/5hands

Let's have a look at **Board 2**

8

We see that preempting to the 5level can be very effective.

How do we respond, generally, to partner's two suited overcall?

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The best approach is to place partner with an opening (1level) hand and respond knowing that any suit you raise has at least five cards in it

If partner is light you may get too high. That may still work. You might overbid to 3♠ and be minus 50 but the opponents make at least ten tricks in diamonds (130, 150, ... , 600?)

If not supporting partner or bidding no trumps, the partner of the overcall can bid the other suit not shown in the auction.

e.g. (1♠) 2N (P) 3♥ = (6)7hearts, to play

At a minimum level this is non-forcing and shows at least six, if not a seven card suit.

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That covers the minors, what if the opponents open in a minor and ***we hold both majors?***

We can show 5/5majors by cue bidding the opponents' suit.

(1♣) 2♣ 5/5majors

(1♦) 2♦ 5/5majors

These are known as ***Michaels cue bids***, after an American player, Michael Michaels (yes, really), who invented them

With this info and what we said about responding to two suited overcalls generally have a look at **Board 3**

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The important responses to the Michaels cue bids that show the majors are:

2♥/♠ To play (unless partner has extras)

3♥/♠ Invitational to game (3+card support, 10-12 hcps or distribution)

Let's try **Board 4**

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We've now covered the situations where the overcaller shows *two known suits*. We also have situations where only one suit is known. Let's start with the opponents opening in a minor

Now

(1♣) 2N Shows 5 diamonds and a 5 card major

(1♦) 2N Shows 5 clubs and a 5 card major

i.e. 2N shows the *unbid minor and a major*

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If we want to know what the overcaller's major is, *partner cue bids the opponents' suit to ask for it*. The overcaller bids the major he has.

... a sufficient clue for **Board 5**

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Board 5 worked well because the partner of the overcaller had game values. We can summarise

(1♣) 2N (P) 3♣ Asks for the major

and

(1♦) 2N (P) 3♦ Asks for the major

3♥ ... shows the heart suit* and

3♠ ... shows the spade suit*

*might bid game with a big hand

But what if the partner of the overcaller has a more limited hand such as in **Board 6**?

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Yes, bidding 3♦ worked well here but there will be times when we don't reach the better-scoring major suit contract (a price of conventions)

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We have one more set of *known suit and unknown suit* to consider.

That's when the opponents open 1major and we have the *other major and a minor*.

Again we make a *Michaels cue bid* by bidding 2 of the opened major.

In summary

(1♥) 2♥ 5spades and 5cards in a minor
(1♠) 2♠ 5hearts and 5cards in a minor

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And when responding:

(1♥) 2♥ (P) 2♠ To play (unless overcaller has extras)
3♠ Invitational, 3+spades (10-12hcps/distrib.)
(1♠) 2♠ (P) 3♥ To play (unless overcaller has extras)
4♥ To play
Note, here, it's not possible to show an invitational raise (optimist? pessimist?)

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If, instead, the partner is interested in the minor suit, he bids 2N

(1♥) 2♥ (P) 2N Asking for minor
3♣ ... shows clubs*
3♦ ... shows diamonds*

*but might bid at a higher level (4♣/♦ or 5♣/5♦) with a better hand

(1♠) 2♠ (P) 2N Asking for minor
3♣ ... shows clubs*
3♦ ... shows diamonds*

*but might bid at a higher level (4♣/♦ or 5♣/5♦) with a better hand

... which takes us to **Board 7**

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We'll end with **Board 8**. ... but before that, do think of the following:

Get used to making the *initial* unusual 2N and Michaels cue bids (1st step)

Judging the responses is more tricky and you may not reach the right level. That takes time and plenty of hands (2nd step)

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Next week (Wednesday, 4th May)

Supervised Play

**(featuring some examples of what
we've covered today)**