

OVERCALLS - Foundation

A. Bidding a suit after an opponent has made an opening bid

(a) Guidelines for a one-level suit overcall

Point range about 8 to 16 HCP

A good five-card or longer suit

Examples of good suits:

K Q 4 3 2	K Q 10 9 8	A Q 8 6 4	A Q 10 9 4
A J 10 8 6	K J 10 9 4	A K 10 5 2	Q J 10 5 2

With 8/9 HCP minimum suit quality is AKxxx.

Advancing (Responding to) partner's one-level overcall with a fit (3 or more cards in partner's suit) when RHO (opener's partner) passes

Points	Support partner's suit?
0 - 5	No - Pass
6 - 9	Yes - Raise to the two level
10 - 12	Yes - Raise to the three level
13 - 15	Yes - Raise to the four level

(These are the same point ranges as *responding* to an *opening* bid.)

Advancing in NT

Hand with stops in opener's suit, may be short in overcalled suit

Points	Stops in opener's suit	Bid
0 - 8		Pass
9 - 12	At least 1	1NT
13 - 15	At least 2	2NT
16 - 18	At least 2 preferably 3	3NT

(The points ranges are 3 higher than when you respond in NT to partner's one-level *opening* bid.)

Advancing with a new suit

Only change suit if you can **guarantee your suit is better** than partner's suit

A good six card suit or longer (two high honours eg K Q 10 9 6 4)

About 8-12 points - encouraging not forcing

(b) Guidelines for a two-level suit overcall

Point range about 12 to 16 HCP

A good six-card suit (two honours) or a very good five card suit (three of the top four honours)

Encouraging not forcing

Examples of good six-card suits:

K Q J 8 7 6	A Q 9 8 4 2	A K J 6 4 2	K J 10 8 6 2
Q J 10 8 5 2	K Q 10 9 7 6	A Q J 8 5 2	A J 10 6 4 2

With 17+, double first, bid your suit second.

Advancing (Responding to) partner's two-level overcall

Points	With support raise partner's suit	With stops in opener's suit bid NT
0 - 5 6 - 9	Pass (partner has already bid at 2-level)	Pass
10 - 12	Raise to 3	2NT
13 - 15	Raise to 4	3NT

(These are the same point ranges as *responding* to an *opening* bid - but with the 0-5 & 6-9 ranges combined as partner has already bid at 2-level.)

The Level of Fit - Total number of trumps held by partnership

In an auction where both opponents have entered the auction it can be useful to use the 'Level of Fit'.

When you have a weak hand but with a fit for the suit partner bid as an overcall, the number of high card points can be less important. You can boldly go to the 'level of fit' and either make the contract or make a good sacrifice.

If you have a fit - 3 or more cards in partner's suit - then calculate the number of trump cards held by your partnership:

- add the known minimum number of cards partner (overcaller) has in the suit bid to the number of cards you hold in that suit.
- this gives you the 'Level of Fit'.

You can now bid that suit at the trick level equalling that number.

Make the bid at your first opportunity - before opener's' next bid - then keep quiet.

Total number of trumps held by partnership	Bid suit at
8	2 level
9	3 level
10	4 level

Responding to opener after an overcall

1. Support partner's suit preemptively to 'Level of Fit' even with only 3 cards (assume opener has 5)
2. Bid **opponent's suit** to make a limit-raise of partner's suit
3. Bid NT but you must have stops in opponent's suit
4. Bid a new 5+ card suit
5. Pass with nothing you can show

B. The 1NT Overcall

If you are in Protective Position - ie *if you Pass the auction will end* - and LHO opened the bidding

eg (1♥) - Pass - (Pass) - your bid

then a 1NT overcall is the **normal 12-14 HCP**.

After **RHO** opens at the 1-level a direct overcall of 1NT shows:

- **15-17 HCP**
- A balanced hand
 - With a good stop in opener's suit
 - Ideally 2 stops

RHO opens 1♥. Should you overcall 1NT?

♠ A Q 4 3 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ K J 5 ♣ J 6 3	♠ Q 10 8 ♥ A Q 10 ♦ K J 5 ♣ Q J 10 7	♠ A 5 ♥ K 10 9 3 ♦ 7 6 4 ♣ A K Q J
Risky - mothy 15 lacking touching honours - you would need to get to partner's hand to lead into yours	Yes 15 with good ♥ honours 'over' opener's suit	Yes 17 with good ♥s over' opener's suit

Advancing Partner's Direct 1NT Overcall

Roughly the same as responding to an opening 1NT: use Stayman & Transfers but with 3 fewer HCP..