



Opponents have opened and they probably have at least 12 HCPs, why would your side bid?

- ♣ Sometimes there is a contract on for either pair...
 - ♣ Sometimes there is a worthwhile sacrifice....
 - ♣ Sometimes you can push the opponents too high
 - ♣ Sometimes you can get them into the wrong contract by using up "bidding space"
 - ♣ You may be able to suggest a lead to partner
- ♣ **BUT sometimes a good hand is good for DEFENCE!**

Overcalling

After one side has opened the auction, a bid of a suit, or No Trumps, by the other side is called an "overcall".

It is NOT an opening bid, and the agreements between partners about its meaning are not the same as for opening bids.

Once both sides have bid, the auction is said to have become "competitive".



Thinking about overcalling?

A really good quality suit

A quality suit has at least five cards. It should also have some strength; a five-card suit should have at least two honours. If you have six cards, one honour may be enough.

One test is to add the number of honours in the suit to the total number of cards in the suit, and overcall if the total is more than or equal to the number of tricks you must make if left in the contract.

High Card Point Count (Overcalling at the 1 level)

N	E	S	W
1♣	1♥	...	

An overcall of 1 of a suit, ("at the one level"), generally promises from 8 to 14 HCP.

You might bend this rule, if the suit is particularly good quality or if the hand has other shape features, for example a singleton. This is called a "simple" overcall.

♠	10 9 8 7
♥	K Q 9 5 4 3
♦	3
♣	A 4

This hand has 9 HCP, and the suit is good quality and there is a singleton.



Overcalling at the 2 level

N E S W
1♠ 2♦ ...

To overcall "at the two level", without jumping, (also known as a "simple" overcall) you need 10-14 HCP.

This hand has 13 HCP and a good quality five-card diamond suit.

East

♠ 10 9 8
♥ A 4 3
♦ K Q 9 5 4
♣ A 4

N E S W
1♦  2♥ ...

Use a jump overcall to show an opening quality hand (11-15) with a six-card suit.

This hand has 13 HCP and a good quality SIX-card heart suit.

East

♠ 10 9 8 7
♥ A K Q 9 5 4
♦ 10
♣ A 4



To overcall 1NT,
you need a balanced hand;
16-18 high card points; AND
At least one stop in the opponents suit

N E S W

1♦ 1NT ...

East

♠ 10 9 8 7

♥ K Q 9 5

♦ A Q

♣ A J 2



Overcalling 1NT

An overcall of 1NT is different to an opening of 1NT. The bidder may have to play in 1NT, against opponents who have at least one opening hand, so needs a balanced hand with 15-18 HCPs. Opponents will lead their bid suit, so the overcaller's hand must have a "stop" in that suit.

Responding to Partner's 1NT Overcall

Similar ideas to responding to 1NT opening.

For example, with few HCPs and a long suit, a two-level suit bid is a weak take out.

You may agree with partner to use Stayman and Transfers in this situation, just remember you are responding to a stronger hand, "add" 4HCPs to your hand.



Advancing the overcall

Responding to partner's overcall with a bid is called "advancing", though people often say "responding" or "replying". The overcall promises different things to an opening bid. It may well not be like an opening hand; use different rules when advancing.

- ♣ Partner promises a good quality suit of at least five cards: if you have three cards in the same suit, there is an 8-card fit
- ♣ Partner may have less than opening points, perhaps only 8 HCP: you need at least 9 HCP to advance the overcall.

N	E	S	W
1♦	1♥	P	?

This hand has quite a good 10 HCP and three cards in Hearts.

It is worth advancing the overcall to 2♥.

West

♠	Q J 10 9
♥	A 7 5
♦	5 4
♣	Q J 7 6