



S..t..r..e..t..c..h Responses

Sometimes the opponents politely watch as you bid your way to your optimum contract. 😊

Often the opponents act and get in the way. ☹️

This is more likely as you improve and take on more experienced opposition. So, you need to be prepared!

One simple method is to agree that:

when partner opens a suit,

the next opponent acts, and

you have four card support for your partner,

you raise partner's suit one more level than you would have done without interference. Sometimes it's called "borrowing a King". It's also known as a Stretch Response.

NESWWest

1♠

P

?

♠ J 10 9 8 7

♥ K Q 4 3

♦ 8 7

♣ 7 4

No InterferenceNESW

1♠

P

2♠

With InterferenceNESW

1♠

2♦

3♠

What is the advantage?

Partner knows you have support. But partner must "discount".

It takes bidding space away from the opponents.

You may take your side beyond a makeable contract.

However think about "sacrifice" scores as well as contract scores.
Often "one down" is good for your side!



Responding to a Suit Overcall

“Advancing” is the technical term for raising partner’s overcall.

It distinguishes this bid from the opener’s partner’s action.

A simple overcall shows at least five cards in a quality suit.

At the one level, it generally indicates 8-14 High Card Points. This is usually 9 to 7 losers, a wide-ranging bid.

It shows a quality suit and indicates preference for a lead, especially an opening lead.

Opener’s partner will respond if possible.

With a fit, they often “add” some value, perhaps 3 HCP or a notional King, to try and make it difficult for their opponents to continue their interference.

So, a pass, or a simple raise, by South may indicate a weaker hand than it would in an uncontested auction.



Being "Competitive"

With a fit, compete with opponents using stretch bids possibly to a sacrifice.

For example

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♥	1♠	P	?

West

♠ J 10 9 8

♥ K Q 4

♦ 10 7 4 3

♣ 7 2

West has support for partner's spades (at least three cards), Game is highly unlikely, but there may be a profitable sacrifice.

Now's the time to check vulnerability. An advancing bid needs 9+HCP or 8 losers.

If East-West have a cautious style, or are vulnerable, it's a Pass.

But if East-West like to compete and are not vulnerable, Then bid 2♠, to take a "level" away from North-South. East would expect little in West's hand.

Looks like either North or East is strong so see who bids on. Spades are great for forcing opponents to the next level.

Bidding partner's suit is "Competitive".



Being "Constructive"

Show good support and a strong hand by bidding the **opponents** suit (the Unassuming Cue Bid). It's Alertable. The message to partner is that you have support (at least three cards), you think game is possible, and you need more information.

For example

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>		<u>West</u>
1♥	1♠	P	?	♠	J 10 9 8

With 14+HCP or 7 or less losers, bid 2♥.

The message to partner is that you have a good hand, with good support, and you think game may be on.

♥ K Q 4
♦ A K 4 3 2
♣ A

Partner must bid again showing the strength of his hand.

Unassuming Cue Bid

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♥	1♠	P	2♥(A)
P	2♠	P	?

East's 2♠ bid shows a minimum strength overcall. Assume 9 losers. West's hand has 5 losers so a raise to 4♠ is in order.

Bidding the opponents' suit is "Constructive".



Holding the opponent's suit (and some HCPs)

Respond NT to an overcall

With at least 10 HCPs and a stop (preferably two) in the opponents' suit, bid NT's.

For example

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>		<u>West</u>
1♥	1♠	P	?	♠	J 10

The message to partner is that you have 9+HCPs, at least one stop in the opponents' suit and little tolerance for partner's suit. Partner could be as weak as 8HCP and 9 losers so be solid for your bid.

♥	K Q 4
♦	A 4 3 2
♣	Q J 10 9

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♥	1♠	P	1NT
P	P	P	

Looks like East doesn't have much! Expect the good cards to be in North's hand.



Changing Suit

For example

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	1♠	P	?

West

If you don't like partner's suit and you're weak, PASS.

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

No Rescues!

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	1♠	P	P

West

If you don't like partner's suit and yours may be longer, and you have some HCPs, and you can tolerate partner rebidding his suit.

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

But with a genuine alternative....

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	1♠	P	2♥



When both sides keep going...

For example

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♥	3♠	4♥	?

Now's the time to consider the situation:

Are the HCPs roughly evenly distributed?

What is the likely trump distribution?

North opened and repeated his Hearts suggesting at least a five-card suit.

East's simple overcall promises at least five in the suit and anything from 8-14HCPs.

South's response looks like a competitive stretch response but suggests a four-card suit.

West's response is competitive rather than constructive and promises at least a three-card suit.

East's repeat suggests a six-card suit.

What is the vulnerability?



The Law of Total Trumps

When the HCPs seem evenly divided, the law of total trumps suggests that each side can make as many tricks as it has trumps so in the above example, each side can make nine tricks in their suit.

On that logic, East/West or North/South could have made nine tricks for 140.

North is one down in 4♥: -100 if vulnerable, -50 if not.

These would be good results for North/South, so East should consider a double: 4♥X-1: -200 if vulnerable, -100 if not.

If East/West go to 4♠ and can make it, the game is a great result. However, they are one down, they give points to North/South. They will give even more if doubled.

The Law of Total tricks suggest Pass or Double.

This part of the game needs scoring knowledge and some fine judgement!



Assessing Partner's Hand

Here is what partner is likely to have when bidding in a competitive auction:

High Card Point Count, and

Losing Trick Count, and

number of cards in suit from partner's bidding.

	<u>HCP</u>	<u>LTC</u>	<u>Cards</u>
Simple Overcall @ 1 Level	8-14	9-7	5+
Simple Overcall @ 2 Level	10-14	8-7	5+
Jump Overcall	11-15	7-6	6+
Double Jump Overcall	6-9	8	7+
Unassuming Cue Bid	11+	7-	3+
Stretch Response @ 2 Level	2-5	10-9	4+
Stretch Response @ 3 Level	6-9	9-8	4+
Stretch Response @ 4 Level	10-12	8-7	4+