

## **When the Opponents Open the Bidding**

When the opponents open the bidding with one of a suit they have shown at least approximately 1/3 of the HCP. You may have the strength for an opening bid or somewhat less, but there are several reasons why you might want to bid your own suit. Bidding a suit of your own after the opponents have opened the bidding is known as an overcall. Example: 1H-2C or 1D-P-2D-2S are both overcalls.

Reasons to Overcall:

- a) To describe to your partner that you have a long (at least 5 card) suit of your own
- b) To suggest that partner lead that suit
- c) To suggest a sacrifice
- d) To make it harder for the opponents to bid to their best contract
- e) To push the opponents too high

Requirements for an overcall:

- a) A good 5 card or longer suit (this is one time when the suit quality makes a difference)
- b) At the one level you may do it with about 8+ HCP depending on the vulnerability and at the two level about 12+ HCP again depending on the vulnerability

Note: You may overcall with less strength than is needed to open the bidding, so partner must keep that in mind when responding.

What do you do when you have the strength for an opening bid but an opponent has already opened the bidding and you do not have a long suit to bid yourself. This is when you double. A low level double of an opponent's bid is for takeout, asking your partner to bid his longest suit other than one that the opponents have already bid. When your partner makes a takeout double and the next hand Passes you **MUST** bid some other suit. Example: 1C-Double-P-?

Requirements for a Takeout Double:

- a) Strength for an opening bid (13 HCP)
- b) Shortness in the suit or suits bid by the opponents
- c) Support for the unbid suits, especially any unbid major suit

Note: When partner responds to your takeout double he is not showing any strength at all.

An overcall is a suit bid to **tell** your partner you have a long suit that you want to show. A double is a bid to **ask** your partner to bid his long suit.

What would you do if your RHO opens 1H?

- a) KJT65 98 AQ2 765
- b) KQ54 98 AQ75 A32
- c) K8 A654 KQT654 9
- d) AQ KJ7 AQ87 J765