

OBAR

**“Opponents Bid-and-Raise”
Balancing Tactics in Direct Seat**

OBAR bids are a Marty Bergen invention.

OBAR = "Opponents Bid and Raise"

When playing OBAR, when opponents bid-and-raise a suit a single suit, actions in DIRECT SEAT are by partnership agreement WEAKER than standard practice:

♠AQ1092 ♥32 ♦J1092 ♣54

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♥	Pass	2♥	2♠

How much weaker depends on vulnerability, but advancing with a two spade bid on this hand would be a normal practice playing OBAR at matchpoints.

♠754 ♥KQJ1082 ♦93 ♣54

* inverted raise, 10+ HCP

LHO	Partner	RHO	You
1♣*	Pass	2♣	2♥

After RHO's inverted raise, a two heart bid on this would appear quite safe, and Be an important lead director.

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Takeout Doubles are also made with very light hands when playing OBAR. Seven or eight high card points may be enough when not vulnerable, and there is room to compete at the 2-level:

♠J1093 ♥Q1064 ♦KQ82 ♣5

When next to speak over 1♣-Pass-2♣,
an OBAR player would be likely to double
with this hand, not vulnerable.

While standard practice normally suggests that the player in balancing seat wishing to compete overbid by about a king (and partner do the opposite – underbid by a king) whether the balancing action is a bid, or a double.

OBAR can also be played over weak double raises, such as 1♣-Pass-3♣, where the opponents use inverted raises. Care should be taken, however, if the opponents are playing weak 1NT openings, since there is a real possibility that opener has a strong notrump for the minor suit opening.

Don't use OBAR after a preemptive opening and preemptive raise. Have your values in direct and balancing seat. The major advantages of OBAR come from exploiting the relative safety of competing at the 2-level.

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OBAR bids are useful in that they give the OBAR pair two ways to win.

- On part score hands, the LAW OF TOTAL TRICKS emphasizes the importance of competing when the opponents are known to have an 8-card fit.
- If you are outbid, the OBAR bid can provide a critical lead director

If you decide to play OBAR:

- Remember it only applies when opponents BID AND RAISE a single suit.
- Keep an eye on vulnerability, especially if you are advancer.
- Avoid OBAR with flatter hand types. There's safety in shape.
- When doubling, remember that the easier it will be for partner to respond at the 2-level, the safer your side will be
- When overcalling, remember your first duty is to direct a lead. So don't make an OBAR bid without a good suit. If you can't stand partner's lead of his honor from Ax or Kx, wait for some other time to make your OBAR bid.