OVERCALLS

Overcalls are a part of bridge no matter what system you play. The reasons to overcall are:

- The hand may belong to your side in a part-score, game or slam
- The overcall can be for the purpose of lead direction
- If the overcall finds partner with a huge fit, your side may be able to take a profitable sacrifice at a high level
- The overcall may simply throw the opposition off balance, causing them to play at the wrong level or in the wrong contract

Simple Overcalls in Notrump

An overcall in notrump, without jumping, shows a hand that might have opened 1 NT. It will be balanced and in the range of about 15-18 HCP. The overcall must include honor card(s) in the suit bid by the opponent which gain in value because of placement. The hand should also contain at least 3 cards in opponent's suit in order to break communication between the defending hands. **Advancers treat their responses as if partner opened 1 NT.** (Use Stayman and Jacoby Transfers)

Examples of 1 NT Overcalls

(A)	**(B)**	**(C)**
A J 8	A J 8	Q 10 7 4
K 10 9 4	K 10 4	K 6
A 6	Q 6 2	K J 10 9 4
K J 8 3	A Q 6 5	A Q

With hands (A) and (B), if RHO opens with 1S, 1H or 1C, overcall 1NT
With hand (C), if RHO opens 1S, 1D or 1C, overcall 1NT. Over 1 H, make a take out double.

Simple Overcalls in a Suit at the one level

Overcalls in a suit should have about 8-16 HCP, a suit of at least 5 cards of reasonable quality. The intention of the overcall might be to get the defense off to a good start without giving up an unnecessary trick on opening lead.

Examples of 1 level Suit Overcalls

(A)	**(B)**	**(C)**	**(D)**
A Q 108 5	10 9	9 8 7 4 2	K Q J 9 5
K 5	K J 7 4 3	K J 8	8 5
Q J 7 2	8 7 2	K 5 3	10 9 6
8 4	10 9 8	A K 10	764
(overcall 1S)	(too weak to overcall)	(overcall 1S)	(overcall 1S for lead)

Simple Overcalls in a Suit at the Two Level

A 2 level overcall requires a good suit of at least 5 cards and typically has 10-16HCP. The suit quality is important as you are contracting for 8 tricks and are more likely to be doubled for penalty. It is better to have a good suit and a poor hand than to have a poor suit and a good hand.

Examples of 2 level Overcalls

(A)	**(B)**	**(C)**
9 7 5	J 6 5	J 6
K Q J 8 7 6	A Q J 9 7 4	K 8 7 4 3
A 8	10 6 2	K Q 5
5 3	4	A J 8

With hands (A) and (B), overcall 1S with 2 H. Both have great trick taking potential
With hand (C), a 2H overcall is dangerous. A takeout double is better

Advancing Partner's Overcall

- A simple raise shows (5+ - 9HCP) and 3 card support if a major
- A change of suit is corrective and non-forcing
- A jump raise of the overcall is preemptive
- Advancer shows all other good hands with a que bid of opener's suit and tends to show a limit raise or better in partner's suit

Preemptive Jump Overcalls

A jump overcall is preemptive and shows the same hand shape and values as would an opening preempt at the same level

Examples of Preemptive Jump Overcalls

(A)	**(B)**	**(C)**
5	6 5	Q 5
K Q 8 7 5 4	A Q 10 8 7 6 5	A Q 10 8 7 6 5 4
K 4 3	Q 8 4	8
J 6 3	6	7 4