

# Defense Against Two-Suit Overcalls

Michaels Cue

Or

Unusual No Trump

# We Have All Learned the Two-Suit Overcalls

- You've learned Michaels Cue and Unusual No Trump.
- Now, let's look at a defense to those bids when opponents use them against you.
- This is a relatively simple system, but it requires:
  - A thorough discussion with your partner.
  - A bit of memory work.

# When Opponents Make a Two-Suit Overcall

- There are two situations to keep in mind.
  - You know both of the opponent's suits.
  - You know one of the opponent's suits, the other is a mystery.
- 1♣ or 1♦, RHO makes a direct cue bid. You know both suits.
- 1 of any suit, RHO bids 2 no trump. You know both suits.
- 1♥ or 1♠, RHO makes a direct cue bid. You know only one of the suits.

# It Is Important

- That you and your partner know the situation with which you are dealing.
  - Are both of the opponent's suits known?
  - Is only one of the opponent's suit known?
- When that is known, we can work out a relatively simple defense, although it requires focus and some memory work.

# Double or Pass

- You can always pass, which is the correct bid when you have a weak hand and no support for partner's suit and no long suit of your own.
- Double is penalty oriented. You have
  - 12+ points
  - You have some values in one of the opponents' known suits or, if only one suit is known, you have values in that suit.
- Any subsequent double by you or your partner is penalty.

# A Raise of Opener's Suit

- 1 ♠ ... 2nt... 3 ♠, shows 6-9 hcps and 3+ card support for partner's suit.
- 1 ♦ ... 2 ♦ ... 3 ♦, shows 6-9 hcps and 4+ card support for partner's suit.
- In these cases, you have bid your hand and you don't intend to bid again.
- With 5-card support of partner's major suit and 5-9 points, you can raise to the 4-level.

# Partner Opens 1 ♠, RHO bids 2 ♠ or 2 no trump

♠ K 4 2  
♥ J 9  
♦ K J 10 5  
♣ Q 8 4 3

Bid 3 ♠

♠ A 9 4 2  
♥ 9 5  
♦ K J 10 5  
♣ 8 6 4

Bid 3 ♠

♠ K J 8 4 2  
♥ 10 9 3  
♦ Q J 10 5  
♣ 3

Bid 4 ♠

# Partner Opens 1 , RHO bids 2 or 2 no trump

♠ K 4 2  
♥ J 9  
♦ K J 10 5 3  
♣ Q 8 4

Bid 3 

♠ A 9 4 2  
♥ 9 5  
♦ K J 10 5  
♣ 8 6 4

Bid 3 

♠ K J 8  
♥ 10 9 3  
♦ Q J 10 5 7 4  
♣ 3

Bid 4 



# Another Way to Raise the Opener's Suit

- When the overcaller gives you one known suit, you can treat it as if she had overcalled that suit.
- After the bidding 1 ♥ and a 2 ♥ cue bid, the overcaller gives you one known suit, spades.
- A bid of 2 ♠, shows partner a limit raise or better in hearts.
- Since you know the Michaels cue bidder has spades, you treat the bid as if he had overcalled spades.

# It Works the Same Way When Partner Opens Spades

- After the bidding 1 ♠ and a 2 ♠ cue bid, the overcaller gives you one known suit, hearts.
- A bid of 3 ♥, shows partner a limit raise or better in spades.
- Since you know the Michaels cue bidder has hearts, you treat the bid as if he had overcalled hearts.

1 ♥ ...(2 ♥)...??

♠ 4 2  
♥ K J 9  
♦ A J 10 5  
♣ Q 8 4 2

Bid 2 ♠ to show  
partner a limit  
raise + in hearts

♠ K 4 2  
♥ A 10 7 5  
♦ K J 10 4  
♣ Q 6

Bid 2 ♠ to show  
partner a limit  
raise + in hearts

♠ 8  
♥ K 10 9 3  
♦ A Q 7 4  
♣ J 9 7 4

Bid 2 ♠ to show  
partner a limit  
raise + in hearts

1 ♠ ... (2 ♠) ... ??

♠ A 4 2  
♥ J 9  
♦ A J 10 5  
♣ Q 8 7 4

Bid 3 ♥ to show  
partner a limit  
raise + in  
spades

♠ K J 4 2  
♥ 7 5  
♦ K J 10 4  
♣ A 6 5

Bid 3 ♥ to show  
partner a limit  
raise + in  
spades

♠ A Q 9 8  
♥ 3  
♦ A K J 7 4  
♣ 9 7 4

Bid 3 ♥ to show  
partner a limit  
raise + in  
spades

# When You Know Both of the Overcaller's Suits

- 1 of any suit... 2nt, you know both of the overcaller's suits, the lower unbid. (Be sure to confirm this with the opponent).
- 1 ♣...(2 ♣) or 1 ♦,,,(2 ♦) You know both of the overcaller's suits, the majors. (Be sure to confirm it with the opponent.)
- When both suits are known, responder has a choice of bids.

# Responder's Options When Both of the Overcaller's Suits are Known

- Responder can pass or double as we discussed at the outset.
- Responder can bid either of the overcaller's known suits.
- Responder can bid the unbid suit.

# Responder Bids the Unbid Suit

- 1 ♥ ...(2nt)... ??
- Partner has hearts, the overcaller has clubs and diamonds, the unbid suit is spades.
- A bid of the unbid suit shows a hand that would have opened a weak two in that suit.

♠ A Q J 8 4 2



♥ J 9

♦ J 10 5

♣ 8 7

Bid 2 ♠ . Opener will pass unless he has a very strong hand.

# Responder Bids the Unbid Suit

- 1  ...(2 )... ??
- Partner has diamonds, the overcaller has hearts and spades, the unbid suit is clubs.
- A bid of the unbid suit shows a hand that would have opened a weak two in that suit.

♠ 8 4 2

♥ J 9

♦ K 10

♣ A J 10 9 7 4

Bid 3 ♣ Opener will pass unless he has a very strong hand.



# Responder Bids the Unbid Suit

- 1 ♠ ...(2 nt)... ??
- Partner has spades, the overcaller has clubs and diamonds, the unbid suit is hearts.
- A bid of the unbid suit shows a hand that would have opened a weak two in that suit.

♠ 4 2  
♥ K J 10 9 6 4  
♦ K 10 8 5  
♣ 9

Bid 3 ♥ Opener will pass unless he has a very strong hand.

# Responder Bids the Lower-Ranking of the Overcaller's Suits

- 1 ♥ ...(2nt)... 3 ♣, shows a limit raise or better in hearts.
- 1 ♣ ...(2nt)... 3 ♦, shows a limit raise or better in clubs.
- 1 ♠ ...(2nt)... 3 ♣, shows a limit raise or better in spades.



# Responder Bids the Lower-Ranking of the Overcaller's Suits

- 1 ♣ ...(2nt)... ??
- Partner has clubs, the overcaller has diamonds and hearts.
- A bid of the lower-ranking of the overcaller's suits shows a limit raise in the opener's suit.

♠ A 9 4 2  
♥ J 9  
♦ K 10  
♣ A J 10 9 7

Bid 3 ♦ to show a limit raise in clubs.

# Responder Bids the Lower-Ranking of the Overcaller's Suits

- 1  ...(2 )... ??
- Partner has diamonds, the overcaller has hearts and spades
- A bid of the lower-ranking of the overcaller's suits shows a limit raise in the opener's suit.

♠ Q 8 4 2  
♥ J 9  
♦ K Q 10 6  
♣ A J 10

Bid 2  to show a limit raise in partner's diamonds.

# Responder Bids the Lower-Ranking of the Overcaller's Suits

- 1 ♥ ...(2nt)... ??
- Partner has hearts, the overcaller has clubs and diamonds.
- A bid of the lower-ranking of the overcaller's suits shows a limit raise in the opener's suit.

♠ Q 8 4 2  
♥ A J 9  
♦ K 10 6 4  
♣ A 8

Bid 3♣ to show a limit raise in partner's hearts.

# Responder Bids the Higher-Ranking of the Overcaller's Suits

- Responder has 5 + cards in the unbid suit.
- Have game interest, not absolutely forcing to game, but strongly encouraging.
- Remember, we said earlier, if you have a weak hand with 6 cards in the unbid suit, you just bid it, expecting partner to pass.
- With this bid, you are **trying to get to game.**

# Responder Bids the Higher-Ranking of the Overcaller's Suits

- 1 ♥ ...(2nt)... ??
- Partner has hearts, the overcaller has clubs and diamonds. The unbid suits is spades.
- A bid of the higher-ranking of the overcaller's suits shows game interest and 5+ cards in the unbid suit.

♠ K Q 8 4 2



♥ J 9

♦ K 10 6 4

♣ A 8

Bid 3 ♦ to show game interest and 5+ cards in the unbid suit.

# Responder Bids the Higher-Ranking of the Overcaller's Suits

- 1  ...(2 )... ??
- Partner has diamonds, the overcaller has hearts and spades. The unbid suit is clubs.
- A bid of the higher-ranking of the overcaller's suits shows game interest and 5+ cards in the unbid suit..

♠ 4

♥ Q 9

♦ K Q 6 4

♣ A Q J 9 7 3

Bid 2 ♠ to show game interest and 5+ cards in the unbid suit.



# Final Points

- One advantage if this system is that when you bid the opponent's suits, you take their bids away from them and make it more difficult for them to find their best contract.
- Reasonably simple and straightforward convention, but requires a lot of memory work.
- Doesn't come up very often.
- Forget factor is relatively high.
- Very helpful when used properly.