

## The Sandwich Seat

After the auction starts with LHO opening one of a suit and RHO responding with one of a suit the fourth seat bidder is in the "sandwich seat". You are stuck between two bidding (and unlimited) opponents and the strong opponent is behind them unlike in a normal overcall situation where you are behind the opening bidder. Additionally, partner had a chance to bid and didn't take it.

Ex. 1C-P-1H-?

Here's some of the key things to think about before bidding:

- You are significantly less likely to win the auction with less than an opening hand - so the lead directing nature of your over call becomes more important
- Soft values (like tenaces and quacks) are even more vulnerable than normal because the opening hand is behind you
- Less need to be aggressive with borderline hands because your partner couldn't overcall at the one level

All of this leads towards being more aggressive with good quality suits and more conservative with poor quality ones.

♠xx ♥xxx ♦AKQxx ♣xxx - consider bidding 2d just to get the diamond lead in

♠Kxx ♥Qxx ♦QJxxx ♣KJ - pass, bidding is too dangerous. If you simply must bid, double instead of insisting on diamonds

This can further extend into your preemptive overcalls

♠KJxxxx ♥xx ♦Qxx ♣xx - pass

♠QJT9xx ♥Kx ♦xxx ♣xx - bid 2S (when not unfavorable vulnerability)

### Jumping to 2N

When the opponents have opened the bidding at the 1 level, standard bidding has 1N as natural showing 15-18 with their opening suit stopped. But 2N is a preempt showing 5-5 in the 2 lowest unbid suits. There is no reason to change the meaning of the jump to 2N, it should still be preemptive showing 5-5 in the 2 lowest unbid suits. It's just that there are only 2 unbid suits so no matter what they are, 2N shows 5-5 in the unbid suits.

E.g. 1C-P-1H-2N = 5-5 spades + diamonds or even 1C-P-1D-2N = 5-5 in the majors!

### Cuebidding

Since we can show 5-5 in the unbid suits and don't need to show 5-5 in the opponent's suits we no longer use the cuebids to show Michaels like hands. Instead there is near universal agreement that cuebidding responder's suit is natural and merely shows a good hand.

After all, we don't want to not be able to bid spades holding AKQJxx Kxx xxx x after the auction 1C-P-1S simply because RHO bid 1S with 8653 in the suit.

Bidding LHO's suit has more possible meanings. Here's some to choose from:

- Natural - good suit
- 5-4 in the unbid suits rather than 5-5 (either suit could be longer)
- 4-5+ in the unbid suits, the lower suit is always longer
- Still 5-5, but the lower suit is stronger than the higher suit, bidding 2N then implies that the higher suit is better

### **Bidding 1N**

Since overcalling 1N can be dangerous given that you are stating that you do not have a long suit as a source of tricks, if the opponents have enough strength they can simply double you for fun and profit. Conversely, as people have started to open and respond with lighter and lighter hands you can find yourself robbed blind if LHO opens a 10 count and RHO responds with a shapely 4 count you might never bid and have 26 combined HCP.

Larry Cohen has switched back to making natural 1N bids in this situation, and many other good players advocate the same, but then so do many good players advocate for 1N being a weak takeout or the "Sandwich NT". Choose the agreement that you find most effective.

In either case, if you are a passed hand, you simply should play the 1N as a weak takeout:

Ex P-1C-P-1S

1N

When playing this bid you then have several ways of bidding the 2 unbid suits. Depending upon what you mean the cuebid of LHO's suit to mean you can have even more.

- X
- 1N
- 2N
- Optionally cuebidding LHO's suit

You should leave 2N as 5-5. That gives you the safety of having a likely fit when you end up playing at the 3 level.

If you are playing this as an unpassed hand, I would suggest a strength difference between 1N and X. Namely 1N is <an opening hand and X is an opening hand or better. Both could be 4-4 or 5-4, but the 1N bid is usually 5-4 since there should be some extra shape strength to counterbalance the lack of HCP strength.

If you are playing this as a passed hand, I would suggest narrowing down on the longer suit when choosing between 1N and double. Say 1N is the lower suit is longer and X is either equal length or the higher suit is longer.

If the cuebid is also used you can complete the set and show all combinations of the unbid suits. E.g. 1C-P-1H-?

X = 4 spades and 4 diamonds

1N = 4 spades and 5+ diamonds

2C = 5 spades and 4 diamonds

2N = 5 spades and 5 diamonds