

Practice Session for U3ABC14: Overcalls

Welcome!

Here is a description of all the hands that you could play in today's Practice Session. It includes details like the cards in each hand, how to evaluate each hand (High Card Points, Shortage Points, shape), the "correct" bidding, and lead.

This week we've given you hands – and permission – to overcall, so there's something for everyone to do!

Don't feel bad if you bid the hands a bit differently, or ended up in a slightly different contract. Each week there's something new, it will take you a while to get the hang of all of it. Hopefully it will make a bit more sense with the detailed explanations given here.

We're here to help, share our enthusiasm for this great game. You will make mistakes, but we're always happy to explain or answer questions. Remember, you're playing with people who are just starting out, too. Let's have fun together!

-Ed

This Week's Lessons – Overcalls

Overcalling one of a suit

If the opposition opens one of a suit and you have a long suit, you can **overcall** with your suit. There are three main reasons for overcalling:

- To try to find your best contract – a Constructive Overcall
- To try to stop your opponents finding their best contract – an Obstructive Overcall
- To suggest a lead to your partner – a Lead Directing Overcall

To overcall at the one-level (e.g. 1H 1S) you usually need:

- 8-15 HCP
- 5 cards in your suit
- 2 Honours in your suit (counting a Ten as an Honour in this case)

To overcall at the two-level (e.g. 1S 2H) you need to be a bit stronger:

- 11-15 HCP
- 5 cards in your suit
- 2 Honours in your suit (counting a Ten as an Honour in this case)

However, you can overcall with fewer points, if your hand passes the **Suit Quality Overcall Test**: add the number of cards in your suit to the number of Honours in your suit (counting a TEN as an Honour for this). The total is the highest you can bid. So, for example, if you have a 5-card suit with three Honours, you score EIGHT and can overcall at the two-level; with a 6-card suit and one Honour, you score SEVEN and can overcall at the one-level.

If you have a LONG trump suit, you can overcall with even fewer points, making a **jump overcall** to OBSTRUCT your opponents. To summarise, assuming opponent opened 1H:

- With 8-15 HCP and FIVE Spades with 2 Honours, you can overcall at the one-level: bid 1S
- With 11-15 HCP and FIVE cards with 2 Honours, you can overcall at the two-level (e.g. 1H 2C)
- With 5-10 HCP and SIX Spades with 2 Honours, you can jump overcall: bid 2S
- With 6-9 HCP and SEVEN Spades with 2 Honours, you can double-jump overcall: bid 3S
- With 6-9 HCP and EIGHT Spades with 2 Honours, you can triple-jump overcall: bid 4S

Overcalls made at the one-level and two-level **without jumping** are generally **Constructive Bids**; you have enough points to hope to make a part score or even game, with support from partner. Jump overcalls are pre-emptive, **Obstructive Bids**; you don't expect to make your contract unless partner is quite strong. Notice that the pre-emptive overcalls require fewer points than a simple overcall – you haven't got many points outside your suit, so won't do well in Defence.

With more than 15 HCP, you don't just overcall, you double first and then rebid your suit: **Double and Bid**. You can also use Doubles to compete when you don't have a long suit. Doubles are described later in this course.

Is that a jump?

A 2-level overcall may be a simple overcall OR a jump. These show different hands! For example:

- 1S 2H is a two-level simple overcall, showing 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit
- 1D 2H is a jump overcall, showing 5-10 HCP and a good 6-card suit: FEWER POINTS, MORE TRUMPS

It's a jump when you choose to bid one or more levels higher than you need to. In the first example, you can't bid 1H over 1S, you are *forced* to bid at the two-level – so it's not a jump.

Risky Business

We're encouraging you to overcall with fairly weak hands, really. You might overall, win the contract, and lose by several tricks, at a significant cost. You pay penalties for going down! So why are we encouraging you in this risky business?

It's a question of balance. For example: your opponents can bid and make 4H, scoring 420 or 620 depending on the vulnerability. If you overcall with 4S you will make seven tricks, paying a penalty of 150 or 300, depending on the Vulnerability. While going down by 3 tricks feels like a disaster, losing 150-300 points is a lot better than losing 420-620 points!

Deliberately bidding a contract that you expect to fail is called a **Sacrifice**. A very emotive term! Obstructive bids often end up leading to a Sacrifice. This is all rather complicated, as you need to know more about the scoring system, Vulnerability, the use of Penalty Doubles – and bluffing? Yep. We will return to this area soon, in the lessons on Doubles and Scoring.

Other overcalls

If an opponent opens one of a suit and you have a stopper in their suit, you may be able to overcall with 1NT. If you have a shortage in their suit you may be able to Double. These other overcalls are described in the next module in this course.

This week's lessons: Responding to overcalls

Responding to a one-level overcall with 3+ support

Remember: Partner has 8-15 HCP and a 5+ suit.

With 3 or more cards in partner's suit you know you have a fit, so raise them as if they had opened. Be aggressive and include Shortage Points. This is usually intended as an Obstructive bid. Do NOT change suit expecting partner to respond – partner won't take this as forcing.

Responding to a one-level overcall without 3+ support

Remember: Partner has 8-15 HCP and a 5+ suit.

With 0-8 HCP: pass. Partner may only have 8 points rather than the 12+ promised by an opening bid, so you can't change suit (usually a Constructive bid) with 6+ points, as you would with an opening bid; you need 9+ points.

With 9+ HCP and an unbalanced hand: you can bid your own GOOD 5-card suit (with 2 Honours) or 6+ suit. Partner will not take this as forcing, they will pass unless they are fairly strong.

With 9+ HCP, a balanced (NT) hand, and a stopper in the opponent's suit:

- With 9-12 bid 1NT
- With 13-14 bid 2NT
- With 15 HCP bid 3NT

Partner may raise 1NT or 2NT with maximum points.

Responding to a two-level overcall with 3+ support

Remember: Partner has 11-15 HCP and a 5+ suit.

With 3 or more cards in partner's suit you know you have a fit, so raise them as if they had opened. Be aggressive and include Shortage Points. Do NOT change suit expecting partner to respond – partner won't take this as forcing.

Responding to a two-level overcall without 3+ support

Remember: Partner has 11-15 HCP and a 5+ suit.

With 0-8 HCP: pass.

With 9+ HCP and an unbalanced hand: you can bid your own GOOD 5-card suit (with 2 Honours) or 6+ suit. Partner will pass unless they are fairly strong.

With 11+ HCP and a balanced (NT) hand, and a stopper in the opponent's suit:

- With 11-12 bid 2NT
- With 13-15 HCP bid 3NT

Partner may raise 2NT with maximum points.

Responding to a jump overcall

Jump overcalls are made with fewer points and are Obstructive Bids. Evaluate your points and fit bearing in mind what partner has shown you:

- A single jump (1H 2S) promises a 6-card suit with 5-10 HCP
- A double jump (1H 3S) promises a 7-card suit with 6-9 HCP
- A triple jump (1H 4S) promises an 8-card suit with 6-9 HCP

In general, raise to the level of fit: add the number of trumps you and partner have, and bid to that number of tricks.

Do you want to play the hand or defend?

- If your hand is strong (with Aces and Kings outside your suit), you are more likely to make your contract – but the opposition is less likely to make theirs. Points inside your long suit are worth a lot less in Defence.
- If your hand is quite weak, you are less likely to make your contract – but the opposition is more likely to make theirs. Points inside your long suit are worth a lot less in Defence.

It's rarely a good idea to change suit, as partner's length and strength are in THEIR suit, not yours. Only change suit if you're sure yours is a better bet.

Bidding No Trumps is also a risky business. Your partner may have an 8-card suit but with no outside entries; you may have stops in the other three suits, but that won't be much use if partner is missing the Ace and King of their suit when you've only got one or two of them to lead.

This week's lessons: Overcaller's second bid

In general, when you overcall, that's your bidding over. If partner raises you or even changes suit, they have done so with a clear understanding of what you have in your hand – you don't bid again unless you have some useful hidden extras that partner can use, such as a fit for their suit.

The Hands

North East South West

1♥	2♣	2♠	3♣
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ 984		
	♥ K98632		
	♦ AK		
	♣ KT		
♠		♠ K752	
♥ AT54		♥ J7	
♦ JT9653		♦ 8	
♣ 542		♣ AQJ973	
	♠ AQJT63		
	♥ Q		
	♦ Q742		
	♣ 86		

Board: 1 Dealer: North #2471

East has 11 HCP and a good 6-card Club suit, so is strong enough to overcall at the 2-level.

A 2-level overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

West has 5 HCP and 3 Clubs; with the Spade void, they're just strong enough for the limit raise to 2C.

East isn't strong enough to bid again.

East South West North

1♠	2♦	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 9		
	♥ T432		
	♦ T763		
	♣ J987		
♠ KT83		♠ AQJ765	
♥ 765		♥ AQ8	
♦ 98		♦ A2	
♣ AQ54		♣ 32	
	♠ 42		
	♥ KJ9		
	♦ KQJ54		
	♣ KT6		

Board: 2 Dealer: East #347

South has 13 HCP, a shortage in Spades, and a good 5-card suit, so overcalls with that suit.

The 2D overcall shows 11-15 points and a 5-card suit.

North has a terrible hand; 4-card support for Diamonds but just one HCP. They pass.

South West North East

1♥	1♠	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ 875		
	♥ QT96		
	♦ KQ9		
	♣ A94		
♠ AKJT2		♠ 943	
♥ 874		♥	
♦ 73		♦ T8652	
♣ KJ7		♣ QT862	
	♠ Q6		
	♥ AKJ532		
	♦ AJ4		
	♣ 53		

Board: 3 Dealer: South Lead: ♠A #376

West has 12 HCP, a good 5-card Spade suit, and three small Hearts. While the Hearts are a worry, they're strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit.

East has 3-card support for partner's overcall but just 2 HCP. They pass, they're not strong enough to bid.

West North East South

1♥	1♠	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♠ QJT654		
	♥ AK		
	♣ JT954		
♠ 983		♠ AK7	
♥ AKQ65		♥ JT87	
♦ 87		♦ J6	
♣ AK7		♣ Q832	
	♠ 2		
	♥ 9432		
	♦ QT95432		
	♣ 6		

Board: 4 Dealer: West #1332

North has 11 HCP and a poor 6-card Spade suit. They're also void in Hearts. They're strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit.

South has 1-card support for partner's overcall, just 2 HCP, but a 7-card Diamond suit. They're not strong enough to bid.

North East South West

1♦	3♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	
	♠ J8		
	♥ A7		
	♦ AQ65432		
	♣ 84		
♠ AQ74		♠ K95	
♥ 3		♥ JT98542	
♦ K98		♦	
♣ AKQ6		♣ J52	
	♠ 632		
	♥ KQ6		
	♦ JT7		
	♣ T973		

Board: 5 Dealer: North #968

East has just 5 HCP, but a 7-card Heart suit headed by JT and a void in the opponent's suit; a nearly perfect hand for an obstructive double-jump overcall! This 3H double-jump (pre-emptive) overcall shows 6-9 HCP and a 7-card Heart suit.

OK, it's *nearl*y perfect because it's got 5 HCP and promises 6-9, but it even passes the Suit Quality Overcall Test, with two Honours (JT) and seven cards making a score of 9, for 9 tricks. I've seen better Honours. Notice how useless this hand would be defending against a Diamond contract, the real clincher.

West has just one Heart, for a 7-1 fit. Not ideal, but with 18 HCP, they're reasonably certain that 4H will make, so they're happy to raise the Obstructive 3H overcall to a very Constructive bid of 4H!

If this convinces North-South to bid 5D, then they will be very happy to watch that contract go down; their hand is just as good in Defence.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If you look at the hands, 4H makes easily, losing three Hearts.

If North-South did bid 5D, they would probably lose two Spades, two Clubs and possibly a Diamond (as, with 10 Diamonds, they might play for drop rather than finesses the King) – for two or three down. That would actually score better than letting East-West make 4H, but 5D would be an unusual bid, they probably expect 4H to go down!

East South West North

1♥	1♠	2♥	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	
	♠ AQJ5		
	♥ J		
	♦ AJ65		
	♣ QJT4		
♠ 932		♠ 8	
♥ T983		♥ AQ7652	
♦ 82		♦ QT7	
♣ A765		♣ K98	

Board: 6 Dealer: East #1385

South has 9 HCP and a weak 5-card Spade suit, just strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit.

North has 16 HCP and an excellent 4-card support for partner's Spades. They can also add 2 points for their Singleton Heart, so with 26-33 points they're strong enough to raise to game.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

If North were feeling really optimistic, they might try for a slam, as partner might have 15 points – but that's unlikely, East couldn't open 1H with just 7 points!

♠ KT764
 ♥ K4
 ♦ K943
 ♣ 32

South West North East

1♥	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

♠ 832
 ♥ 3
 ♦ QJ74
 ♣ 98432

♠ KJ75		♠ AQT96
♥ 752		♥ AKQ4
♦ K832		♦ T
♣ Q5		♣ T76

♠ 4
 ♥ JT986
 ♦ A965
 ♣ AKJ

Board: 7 Dealer: South #1932

West has 9 HCP but no 6-card suit, so can't overcall South's 1H.

East has 15 HCP and a good 5-card Spade suit, so overcalls with 1S.

The 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit.

West has good 4-card support for partner's Spades, and 9 HCP, so can raise them to 2S.

The 2S limit raise of the overcall shows 6-9 points and 3-card support.

East can see 21-24 points, plus 2 points for their Singleton Diamond. Feeling a bit optimistic, they bid 4S.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

East's 4S bid is rather optimistic; I'd raise to 3S, asking West to bid 4S with a maximum.

West North East South

Pass	1♠	2♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ AQJT64
 ♥ K6
 ♦ Q4
 ♣ K95

♠ K8		♠ 95
♥ 97542		♥ AQJT8
♦ 53		♦ AK86
♣ AJ76		♣ 43

♠ 732
 ♥ 3
 ♦ JT972
 ♣ QT82

Board: 8 Dealer: West #1956

West has 8 HCP, so passes.

East has 14 HCP and a good 5-card Heart suit, strong enough to overcall at the 2-level.

A 2-level overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

West has 5-card support for partner's Heart overcall, 8 HCP and 2 points for their two Doubletons. This produces a total point count of 21-25. Feeling a bit optimistic, they bid 4H.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

West's Kx in Spades may be worthless as North bid Spades. West's 4H bid looks really optimistic to me; I'd pass. Would you?

North East South West

1♦	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	
	♠ A63		
	♥ K982		
	♦ KJT96		
	♣ K		
♠ Q84			♠ KJT97
♥ A7			♥ J54
♦ Q532			♦ A7
♣ 8762			♣ AJ5
	♠ 52		
	♥ QT63		
	♦ 84		
	♣ QT943		

Board: 9 Dealer: North #2916

East has 14 HCP and a decent 5-card Spade suit, so is strong enough to overcall.

The 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit.

West has 8 HCP and 3-card support for partner's Spades, so raises to 2S.

The 2S limit raise of the overcall shows 6-9 points and 3-card support.

East can see 20-23 points, plus 1 point for their Doubleton Diamond. The maximum 24 points is not enough for game, so they pass. Phew.

East South West North

1♠	Pass	2♣	2♥
3♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ A975		
	♥ KQJ754		
	♦ KQ		
	♣ 7		
♠ QJT			♠ K6432
♥ A82			♥ T
♦ 74			♦ A93
♣ KQT52			♣ A943
	♠ 8		
	♥ 963		
	♦ JT8652		
	♣ J86		

Board: 10 Dealer: East #2081

North has 15 HCP and a good 6-card Heart suit, strong enough for a 2-level overcall.

A 2-level overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

South has a terrible hand, just 1 HCP, so they pass.

North isn't strong enough to bid over 4S, so passes.

South West North East

1♥	2♣	2♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ J83		
	♥ AJT		
	♦ KT74		
	♣ A96		
♠ AQ76			♠ K92
♥			♥ 97632
♦ 983			♦ 52
♣ KQT752			♣ 843
	♠ T54		
	♥ KQ854		
	♦ AQJ6		
	♣ J		

Board: 11 Dealer: South #2404

West has 11 HCP, a good 6-card Club suit and void in Hearts, so is happy to overcall 1H with 2C.

A 2-level overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

East has just 3 HCP, so isn't strong enough to bid.

West isn't strong enough to bid over 3D, so passes.

West North East South

1♥ Pass 1♠ 2♦
 3♥ Pass 4♥ Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ T8653
 ♥ 2
 ♦ 8753
 ♣ K97

♠ AKJ ♠ Q742
 ♥ KQJT87 ♥ 654
 ♦ 4 ♦ KJ
 ♣ J53 ♣ AT62

♠ 9
 ♥ A93
 ♦ AQT962
 ♣ Q84

Board: 12 Dealer: West #2696

South has 12 HCP and a decent 5-card Diamond suit, so overcalls with 2D.

A 2-level overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

North has just 3 HCP, so isn't strong enough to bid.

South isn't strong enough to bid over 4H, so passes.

North East South West

1♠ 2♥ 2♠ Pass
 4♠ Pass Pass Pass

♠ AKQ32
 ♥ AT84
 ♦ A3
 ♣ J6

♠ 976 ♠ 84
 ♥ J32 ♥ KQ975
 ♦ QT9876 ♦ J
 ♣ 4 ♣ AKQT9

♠ JT5
 ♥ 6
 ♦ K542
 ♣ 87532

Board: 13 Dealer: North #13

East has 15 HCP and two good 5-card suits, so overcalls with the higher, 2H (intending to bid Clubs if they get a chance).

A 2-level overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

West has just 3 HCP, so isn't strong enough to bid.

East isn't strong enough to bid over 2S, so passes.

East South West North

1♠ 2♥ 3♠ Pass
 4♠ Pass Pass Pass

♠ 876
 ♥ 95
 ♦ QJ852
 ♣ K87

♠ Q432 ♠ AKJT9
 ♥ Q3 ♥ 764
 ♦ A4 ♦ K93
 ♣ J9432 ♣ A6

♠ 5
 ♥ AKJT82
 ♦ T76
 ♣ QT5

Board: 14 Dealer: East #16

South has 10 HCP and a good 6-card suit, so overcalls with 2H.

A 2-level overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit; South is a little weaker (10 HCP) but that's forgivable as they have a 6-card suit.

North has 6 HCP but only 2 Hearts, so isn't strong enough to raise.

South isn't strong enough to bid over 4S, so passes.

South West North East

1♣	1♥	1♠	2♥
3♣	Pass	5♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ KQJT2		
	♥ 65		
	♦ A32		
	♣ Q87		
♠ 64		♠ A9873	
♥ KQJ97		♥ T84	
♦ KT4		♦ Q875	
♣ 952		♣ 6	
	♠ 5		
	♥ A32		
	♦ J96		
	♣ AKJT43		

Board: 15 Dealer: South #542

West has 9 HCP and a good 5-card Heart suit, so they're strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1-level 1H overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

East has 6 HCP and 3 Hearts, just enough to limit raise to 2H.

The 2H limit raise of the overcall shows 6-9 points and 3-card support.

West isn't strong enough to bid again.

West North East South

1♣	1♠	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ AKQT98		
	♥ 7		
	♦ JT976		
	♣ 6		
♠ 764		♠ J5	
♥ AK43		♥ 982	
♦ K		♦ AQ43	
♣ QJ743		♣ AK52	
	♠ 32		
	♥ QJT65		
	♦ 852		
	♣ T98		

Board: 16 Dealer: West #910

North has 10 HCP and a good 6-card Spade suit, so they're strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1-level 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

South has just 3 HCP and 2 Spades, so isn't strong enough to bid.

North isn't strong enough to bid again.

North East South West

Pass	1♠	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ 54		
	♥ J743		
	♦ KQ2		
	♣ AJ62		
♠ AT8		♠ Q97632	
♥ 62		♥ 9	
♦ T984		♦ A75	
♣ T954		♣ KQ3	
	♠ KJ		
	♥ AKQT85		
	♦ J63		
	♣ 87		

Board: 17 Dealer: North #129

South has 14 HCP and a good 6-card Heart suit, so overcalls with 2H.

This 2-level 2H overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

North has four Hearts, so they could raise partner's suit pre-emptively, but they have 11 HCP plus a Doubleton, so game is possible.

North's bid of the opponent's suit, 2S, is a convention called the **Unassuming Cue Bid** (UCB). This UCB promises a fit with partner's suit and 10+ HCP.

South can see at least 24 HCP, not quite enough for game, but their excellent trump suit and trump fit are more than enough for 4H.

Advanced Discussion

If you make an Unassuming Cue Bid, your partner should Alert it to show it's not natural – and explain it if an opponent asks them to.

We haven't taught you the Unassuming Cue Bid yet. Without it, North just has to hope that partner is strong enough, and bid 4H – partner is unlikely to raise it to 4H.

East South West North

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ A872
 ♥ K
 ♦ 942
 ♣ JT982

♠ KQJ
 ♥ 862
 ♦ 653
 ♣ AK63

♠ 9653
 ♥ AT75
 ♦ AK
 ♣ Q54

♠ T4
 ♥ QJ943
 ♦ QJT87
 ♣ 7

Board: 18 Dealer: East #2925

East has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT.

The 1NT opening bid shows 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

West has 13 HCP, bringing the partnership total to 25-27, enough for 3NT.

South West North East

1♠ 2♦ 4♠ 5♦
 Pass Pass Pass

♠ QT753
 ♥ A83
 ♦ 6
 ♣ 9832

♠ 4
 ♥ QJ
 ♦ QJT8743
 ♣ AQ7

♠ 86
 ♥ KT942
 ♦ AK95
 ♣ T5

♠ AKJ92
 ♥ 765
 ♦ 2
 ♣ KJ64

Board: 19 Dealer: South #1531

West has 12 HCP and a nice 6-card Diamond suit, so they overcall with 2D. They have enough Diamonds for a 4D jump overcall, but they are too strong; a double-jump is a pre-emptive overcall, a limit bid showing 6-9 HCP.

This 2-level 2D overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

North raises partner's 1S to 4S based on their 5-card Spade suit, 6 HCP and two Shortage Points. That's rather aggressive – or maybe optimistic – based on 20-27 points. 3S would be more sensible, leaving partner to decide.

East has four good Diamonds, 10 HCP, and two Shortage Points - so they can see 21-26 points. Most of their points are in Diamonds, so it's not a good hand for defending. With the 4S bid, there's no room left for subtlety, so they bid 5D as a sacrifice, with some chance of making it.

Advanced Discussion

It looks like both sides bid quite – erm – adventurously. Who's pre-empting and who's sacrificing? I think they both are! The 4S bid was, at best a bluff, hoping to make the opposition make an even riskier bid to stop them making 4S. Which they would not do!

People can get a bit carried away in a competitive auction. Did you?

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	Pass	1♠
3♣	3♦	4♣	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	
	♠ K2		
	♥ KT872		
	♦ QJT72		
	♣ 9		
♠ A			♠ T985
♥ Q65			♥ AJ943
♦ A9			♦ 5
♣ KQJ6543			♣ T82
	♠ QJ7643		
	♥		
	♦ K8643		
	♣ A7		

Board: 20 Dealer: West #2032

North has 10 HCP and two 5-card suits. They have the length and strength to overcall at the one-level (or two-level) without a jump – but which suit?

They choose the higher-ranked suit, Hearts, so they can bid their second suit economically on a subsequent round. Hearts is also a better-scoring suit. This one-level 1H overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

East passes because they have only 5 HCP and a 5-card suit bid by the opposition!

South really does not like partner's Hearts, with a void. They have a decent 6-card Spade suit and 10 HCP, so they bid 1S – showing 0-2 Hearts, 9+ HCP, and a good 5-card suit.

West rebids their Clubs, jumping to show both length and strength.

North doesn't like partner's Spades much; they might only have 5, for a 7-card fit. So they continue bidding as planned, with 3D.

This 3D rebid shows at least 4 Diamonds and a moderate hand. It denies 3-card support for partner's Spades.

East bids 4C to show they have some support, a bit rash.

South has excellent 5-card support for partner's Diamonds and a fairly poor hand for defending against 4C. Despite their lack of HCP, they have a void in Hearts and a doubleton in Clubs: 10 HCP + 4 SP when playing in Diamonds. Assuming partner has around 10 HCP and shortages in Spades and Clubs, 5D seems reasonably likely to make, so they bid it.

Advanced Discussion

Again, both sides were quite aggressive here, but with good reason this time; West has an excellent long suit and North-South have lots of Shortage Points if they can find a fit, which they did, in Diamonds.

It looks like both 5D and 5C could make. That's the power of shapely hands: long suits and shortages are often better than HCP!

Summary

Commentary Synopsis				
	u3aBC14			
	Subject	Overcalls	Hand #	Declarer / Defender
1	N	1H, 2C, 2S, 3C, 3S, 4S	2471	Dec
2	E	1S, 2D, 3S, 4S	347	Dec
3	S	1H, 1S, 3H, 4H	376	Dec
4	W	1H, 1S, 3H, 4H	1332	Dec
5	N	1D, 3H, 4H	968	Dec
6	E	1H, 1S, 2H, 4S	1385	Dec
7	S	1H, 1S, 2S, 4S	1932	Dec
8	W	1S, 2H, 4H	1956	Dec
9	N	1D, 1S, 2S	2916	Dec.
10	E	1S, 2C, 2H, 3C, 4S	2081	Dec
11	S	1H, 2C, 2D, 3D, 4H	2404	Dec
12	W	1H, 1S, 2D, 3H, 4H	2696	Dec.
13	N	1S, 2H, 2S, 4S	13	Dec.
14	E	1S, 2H, 3S, 4S	16	Dec
15	S	1C, 1H, 1S, 2H, 3C, 5C	542	Dec
16	W	1C, 1S, 2D, 2H, 5C	910	Dec
17	N	1S, 2H, 2S, 4H	129	Dec
18	E	1NT, 3NT	2925	Dec.
19	S	1S, 2D, 4S, 5D	1531	Dec
20	W	1C, 1H, 1S, 3C, 3D, 4C, 5D	2032	Dec