

Bidding 3NT and Making 2-level Overcalls

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Bidding 1NT with 25HCP.

South opens 1♠ and as West you hold:

West ♠K85 ♥AJ2♦KQ43 ♣Q102

Using the 4-3-2-1 system many may count the hand as 15HCP.

After North Passes and you as East hold:

East ♠Q43 ♥986 ♦J75 ♣AK75

Using the 4-3-2-1 system you count 10 HCP and bid 3NT.

Playing the hand, you go DOWN 1. What went wrong?

The hand evaluation method employed by the pair playing 2/1.

West has only 14H points not 15 after you subtract -1 for the flat 4333 distribution using the Optimal Point Count (OPC) method. But with the lone ♠Kxx in the opponents' suit West must make the further adjustment of -1, the Adjusted Optimal Point Count (AOC) for the hand is only 13.

More importantly the jump to 3NT by East is terrible. Why? The single Q and J are worth only 2 points not 3 and with a flat 4333 distribution has only 8.5 points with the Ace valued at 4.5 using the OPC method ($1.5+0.5+7.5-1=8.5$).

The total is only $13+8.5=21.5$ enough 2NT. Yes, Est should invite, and West will PASS.

Forget the rule with 8/9 invite and with 10 bid games!

2-level Overcalls

South opens 1♥ and you as West hold:

West ♠Q5 ♥K102♦AKQ43 ♣102

With 15HL points (HCP + L) overcalls 2♦. North doubles and East holds:

West ♠43 ♥82♦Q9843 ♣KQ98 bid 4♦.

South and West both pass and North doubles the 4♦ contract for DOWN 2 since the ♥A is off-side

What went wrong? A terrible overcall bid by West again using only HCP and not adjusting for cards in the Opponent's bid suit.

Using the OPC method West has 16HLD points -2 points for 4 hearts in the opponent's suit, -1 point for the lone ♥K or 13AOC points. But without a singleton or a 6-card minor a terrible overcall bid! West must PASS.

East is not at fault since he holds 11.5HDF points.

To make matters even worse North-South did not have a game in either major.

Forget the Rule that says overcall with a good 5-level suit and 13-17HCP.

In general, making an overcall at the 2-level may get you into a lot more trouble than at the 1-level when not adjusting for cards in the opponents' suit and for lone honors.

How do you treat 1-level overcalls? Many use the rule 7-12HCP with a good 5-card suit. Again, pure foolishness without appropriate adjustments.