

Bridge 101 – Lesson 7

Advancing the Overcall

Notice:

Thursday is our last session. I hope you have all enjoyed this course. On Thursday we will have a play day. I'll be there along with some invited guests.

Overcalls recalled:

An **overcall** is a bid made over an opener who is one of your opponents. Your partner has either not yet bid or has passed.

Last time we looked at the case where the opener was your RHO (right hand opponent). This is called a **direct overcall**.

A **simple overcall** is an overcall at the 1 level of bidding a suit.

For a simple overcall we want 10-16 points and a 5-card suit with 2 of the 5 honors headed by at least a Q (a K is safer) or a 6-card suit at least 1 honor (here I'd like at least a Q).

For an overcall at the 2 level you want to have 13-16 total points and a good 5+ card major or a good 6+ card minor with "good" defined above.

Advancing the overcall, general:

Today imagine you are sitting in the North seat. The scenario is your LHO (East) is opener, your partner as South overalls (making partner the overcaller), your RHO (West) is responder, which makes you, as North, advancer)

Now as "advancer", you are responding to your partner but it would get confusing to have two "responders". So we call you the advancer.

As advancer, you can pass, raise partner's suit, show a new suit of your own or bid no-trump.

That is all the possibilities from before. :)

The difference here is the point ranges for opener versus overcaller.

13 – 21 is our point range for an opener.

10 – 16 is our point range for overcaller at the one level.

If your partner is opener with 6 points you "owe your partner a bid other than pass", because partner could have as many as 21 points and you might belong in game.

Now suppose your partner overcalls at the one level and you are the advancer with 6-7 total points.

You owe your partner a PASS!

With partner as overcaller you count total points (in the usual way, hcp's only if you are considering a NT bid, hcp's plus shortage if you have found a trump fit and hcp's plus length if you are going to bid a new suit).

Minimum hand advances with examples:

If partner makes a simple (1 level) overcall and you have 8-10 points it is considered a minimum hand.

When you are in this situation (partner makes an overcall at the one level and you have 8-10 total points, a minimum hand), you can do one of three things.

With 3+ card support for partners major suit raise your partners suit to the two level.

If you do not have 3+ card support for partners suit and you have a good 5-card suit that can be bid at the one level, bid it.

If you do not have 3+ card support for partners major suit, you have no good 5-card suit and you have a stopper in opener's suit, bid 1NT.

Your LHO opens 1♣ and your partner overcalls 1♠.

LHO's point range is 13-21 total points.

Minimum number of clubs for LHO is three.

Partners point range is 10-16.

Minimum number of spades for partner is five and they better be "good".

Your LHO opens 1♣, Partner overcalls 1♠, RHO passes.

You hold: ♠A872 ♥8642 ♦QT72 ♣5.

You have 4+ card spade support. With 6 hcp's and 2 points for the singleton club you have your eight total points for a minimum hand.

You bid 2♠.

Your LHO opens 1♣, Partner overcalls 1♠, RHO passes.

You hold: ♠9763 ♥KQ7 ♦T982 ♣53.

You have 4+ card spade support. With 5 hcp's and 1 point for the singleton club you have 6 total points.

You PASS.

Your LHO opens 1♣, Partner overcalls 1♥, RHO passes.

You hold ♠QJT7 ♥J2 ♦QT94 ♣K97.

You have 9 hcp's and a stopper in clubs.

You bid 1NT. You are telling your partner you have 8-10 hcp's and no support or suit to bid at the one level.

If you bid your spades partner will take you for having five of them.

Your LHO opens 1♣, Partner overcalls 1♥, RHO passes.

You hold ♠KJT7 ♥T2 ♦QT94 ♣K9.

Now you can bid those spades, you have 9 hcp's plus 1 point for length.

Your bid is 1♠.

Once again we give preference to bidding majors. So if you have a 5+ card major even with 3-card support for partners minor, bid it (with 8+ points).

Your LHO opens 1♣, Partner overcalls 1♦, RHO passes.

You hold ♠KQ973 ♥42 ♦K63 ♣Q54.

With 10 hcp's and 1 point for length you bid 1♠ despite having three card support for the minor.

If partner can support your spades, making 2♠'s will earn more points than making 2♦'s.

Numerous possibilities:

We are in “trouble” again. Possibilities for partner as overcaller are simple (at the one level) or an overcall at the two level. As advancer we can have minimum points or more than minimum points.

Too many possibilities so we have to THINK.

As advancer when partner overcalls at the two level, partner is showing opening values so we can rely on what we know as responders to opener's bid.

As advancer for a simple overcall, here is a summary organized in a slightly different way.

Example: Your LHO opens 1♦, Partner overcalls 1♥.

With 3+card heart support and 0-7 points, PASS.

With 3+card heart support and 8-10 points bid 2♥.

With 3+card heart support and 11-13 points, bid 3♥.

With a 5+ spade suit and 8 – 13 points bid 1♠

don't pass by a 5+ spade suit to bid NT (NT, no major).

With stoppers in the opponents suit and a balanced hand you can bid NT.

1 NT with 8-10 hcp's

2 NT with 11-13 hcp's

3 NT with 14-16 hcp's

If you have no fit for your partner you can bid a good 5 card suit of your own with 8 – 10 points at the one level.

If you need to go to the two level, best have 11+ points.