

Interfering In Their Auction

When the opponents have opened the bidding, they are at an advantage. We all have a lot of agreements, understandings and conventions to help us navigate to the best contract assuming the opponents are passing throughout. Although we will not usually be able to bid and make game when the opponents open, we should nonetheless be on the lookout for ways to disrupt their auctions. We should also be aware of how to respond if our partner interferes in the opponent's auction (via overcalling or making a takeout double)

Overcall One No Trump

Sometimes we will have a strong, balanced hand and we are planning to open but the opponents open ahead of us. Overcalling No Trumps shows roughly the same as opening a No Trump but will also have a stopper in the opponents' named suit.

♠ KJ7
♥ AQ3
♦ AT983
♣ QJ

Suppose our Right Hand Opponent opens One of a Major. We should overcall One No Trump. It shows 15-17(18) HCP, a balanced hand and a stopper in their suit. This is a rare instance where we *might* still be able to make game, even though they opened.

Our partner can respond to our overcall exactly the same as if we had opened One No Trump.

Overcall Your Suit

Overcalling a suit at the cheapest level shows a **good quality, five card suit or longer** and around about 10-15 HCPs. If we are able to overcall at the One Level, it is okay to go a little lower (maybe 8-15 HCPs) **as long as the suit is good**.

♠ 742
♥ AK953
♦ 9
♣ QJT2

Suppose our Right Hand Opponent opens One Diamond. We should overcall One Heart. We do not have enough points to open but overcalling is more about suit quality and shape than HCPs.

Opposite an overcall, our partner should only respond with a good hand or a good fit.

Make A Takeout Double

Sometimes we want to bid but we don't know *what* to bid. Often, a takeout double is the answer. It shows: "Shortage in the bid suit, tolerance (3+) in all the other suits, enough points that I would have bid if they hadn't"

♠ 52
♥ KQT5
♦ KJ32
♣ AJT

Suppose our Right Hand Opponent opened One Spade. We should double (for takeout). We are asking our partner to choose a suit, confident that we have support no matter what she chooses. We are showing enough points that we would have bid if they hadn't.

Opposite a double, partner should jump with more than ten points. Doubler shouldn't bid again!

Make A Power Double

All of the above generally "cap" our hand. When we overcall One No Trump we have 17 (18) or fewer HCPs. When we overcall we have 15 (16) or fewer. When we make a takeout double, we usually have a balanced 12-15 HCPs. Very rarely, we will find ourselves with a hand "too good" to overcall. In those very rare situations, we will double (which our partner will think is takeout) and **then bid our own suit**. This will show an overcall of 17(16) or more HCPs – a very strong hand. It suggests that maybe this is still our hand, even though the opponents opened the bidding.

It is an example of bidding our hand over two bids (rather than the more usual one bid = one message). Because doubling and bidding again shows a good hand, it is imperative that you not bid again after making a usual takeout double "just because". If you make an ordinary takeout double and then raise your partner's suit, you are showing 16/17 or more HCPs.

(This last topic will be covered in more detail in a separate lecture. It is included here as a warning!)