

Two-Suited Overcalls

Rationale

When the opponents open the bidding and you hold 5-5 in two of the remaining suits, things are looking good for your side. There is an 85% chance that you will find a fit with partner in one of your suits. This means that you can bid with a very low number of high card points(HCP). This recognizes the power of distribution over "points".

These notes provide a framework to show your two-suiter with just ONE bid. To help partner decide how high to bid, we make our two-suiter bids with either a *weak* hand (6 – 10 HCP) or a *strong* hand (16+HCP).

- With the weak hand, we make our bid and then bid no more – Leave it up to partner.
- With the strong hand, we make our bid and then bid again.
- With an in-between hand, common practice is to simply bid the suits.
- What constitutes a strong hand may require judgment. For example, a hand which is 6-6 in shape is far more powerful than 5-5. Of course, if your side doesn't finish up as declaring, your hand will be useless for defence!
- Your high cards should be mainly located in your long suits to justify your two-suiter bid.
- Think of partner. When you force partner to choose one of YOUR long suits, he may have only a doubleton! With the weak two-suiter, make sure that you let partner do any pushing in the bidding.
- When partner shows a weak two-suiter and you have no good fit, be wary of bidding too much. 3NT on a misfit will rarely be a success, despite the fact that you are looking at a good hand.
- When you have a good fit with partner's two-suiter, be prepared to bid aggressively. Length in one of his suits and shortage in the other is fine. Imagine how the hand will be played. You will be cross-ruffing madly.
- When you have a good fit with partner's two-suiter, you should be able to bid to the Total Number of Trumps (TNT) easily. Say you have 5 trumps to go with partner's promised 5 trumps. That makes 10 trumps. So, bid comfortably to the 4 level (10 tricks)
- When you have a good fit with partner's two-suiter, a sacrifice over there suit game contract is attractive. The penalty is rarely severe. Of course, you must take the vulnerability into account.
- Notice that it is the *partner* of the two-suited hand who makes most of the decisions! He is in the best position to judge how high – and often – to bid.

The Bids

• 2NT Jump Overcall

This bid (alert) shows 5-5 in the *lowest two* of the remaining three suits. Opposition bids are in brackets.
 (1S) – 2NT shows 5-5 in the minors
 (1C) – 2NT shows 5-5 in the red suits
 2NT can also be used to show 5-5 in the unbid suits when the opponents show two suits
 (1H) – P – (2D) – 2NT shows 5-5 in the blacks.
 Since both opponents are showing values, this bid may seem risky. However, they are probably going to miss a good contract too.

- **Michael's Cue Bid** – bidding their suit
 * *Over their major*, the cue bid shows the *other major* and an *unknown minor*. To find out which minor, partner bids cheapest No Trump which asks for the minor suit to be bid. This continues to apply, even when the opponents keep bidding. e.g.
 (1H) – 2H shows spades and minor
 (1H) – 2H – (4H)) – 4NT asks for the minor to be bid.
 * *Over their minor*, the cue bid shows *both majors* e.g.
 (1D) – 2D shows both majors
- Notice that there is always one pair of suits for which you have no two-suiter bid available.
- You can also apply two-suiters over pre-empts .e.g.
 (3C) – 4C shows both majors, strongish since their bid is weak.

Dlr W	♠AQ64		
Vul N/S	♥AK864		
	♦A82		
	♣T		
♠T83		♠75	
♥753		♥T	
♦54		♦QJT76	
♣AJ932		♣KQ654	
	♠KJ92		
	♥QJ92		
	♦K93		
	♣87		

W	N	E	S
P	1H	2NT	3H
5C	?		

Will NS X for penalties? At best, they will get 500
 Will NS bid on to 5H? Probably and they get 650.
 Look what they miss! 6S is cold and the suit was never bid. Without our 2NT bid, the auction might go (1H) – P – (1S) -

Dlr W	♠K62		
NS vul	♥AKT842		
	♦AQ2		
	♣A		
♠83		♠AQ974	
♥J9		♥-	
♦KJ7		♦T94	
♣JT6532		♣Q9874	
	♠JT5		
	♥Q7653		
	♦8653		
	♣K		

W	N	E	S
P	1H	2H	4H
5C	P	P	?

This scary hand happens more often than you think. Notice that both sides can make game!
 What do you make of south's 4H bid? Certainly, the "weak freak" is an attractive option. However, south needs to ask the question :- "What am I going to do when 4S or 5C comes back to me?". Perhaps 3H or a cunning pass may be a better option.