

DEFENSIVE BIDDING BY A PASSED HAND

In the Direct Position

Single jump overcalls in a suit are obviously not as strong as a direct strong jump overcall but still show a good hand with 1-1/2 to 2+ defensive tricks. Suit quality may not be great, however, and could be a seven-card suit in a hand judged unsuitable for an opening bid. Bid 2 ♠ over a one-level suit opening when not vulnerable with ♠AJ98642 ♥K109 ♦3 ♣65 or ♠Q109432 ♥2 ♦43 ♣AQ53, both of which are normal simple overcalls when vulnerable. A jump to three of a minor suit implies a seven-card suit headed by AKQ or AKJ10, as a 3NT contract is not out of the question.

A 1NT or 2NT overcall shows the lower two unbid suits, at least 5-5, and may be worthless defensively. Partner prefers the lower ranking of the two suits when holding equal length if both are of the same rank, but will prefer a major to a minor with the same length in each. See section 8-9, Unusual Notrump.

A direct cue bid overcall is a Michaels Cue Bid: cue bid of a minor shows both majors, cue bid of a major shows the other major plus an unknown minor (partner bids notrump to inquire).

When the Opponents Have Bid Two Suits

There are three ways of showing length in the unbid suits when the opponents have bid two suits:

1) A takeout double shows length in the unbid suits, and also shows defensive strength. The doubler should have close to an opening bid, and some of the high cards may be in the opposing suits. Length in a single unbid major is likely to be four cards, in both majors 5-5 or 5-4 (not 4-5, because partner will prefer the higher ranking with equal length).

2) A cue bid also shows a good hand, but implies that all high cards lie in the two unbid suits:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♦	2♦	- ♠AJ986 ♥K10973 ♦3 ♣65
			Dbl - ♠J10987 ♥QJ976 ♦KJ ♣A
			2♣ - natural

3) A notrump bid is the weakest in strength, but promises at least 5-5 in the unbid suits. Partner will prefer the lower ranking with equal length, so one might bid notrump with 5-6 in the two suits but just overcall with 6-5.

Reopening Calls

Reopening calls when a one level opening is passed around are all unchanged in meaning when made by a passed hand, except for the limitation on strength implied by the initial pass. A reopening cue bid shows a 5-4-4-0 hand, void in the opposing suit, or a two-suited hand of any strength.

South	West	North	East
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass
1NT - 10-12 HCP notrump hand			
2NT - ♠3 ♥4 ♦AQJ32 ♣Q108765			
3♣ - ♠32 ♥76 ♦AJ ♣KJ98752			
2♠ - ♠ void ♥Q876 ♦Q9876 ♣AQ76			
2♠ - ♠6 ♥Q10873 ♦AJ9632 ♣5			

Note that a reopening 1NT bid is not Unusual Notrump, but 2NT is. To double and then bid 1NT requires no more than a 1NT bid (for an unpassed hand, doubling and bidding notrump after a minimum response shows more than a notrump overcall).

When the cue bidder takes out a suit response into a new suit, he shows a two-suited hand and asks for a choice:

South	West	North	East
Pass	1♣	Pass	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠ - spades and diamonds			

Also see section 8-7, Reopening the Bidding, and Section 10-5 Reopening Cue Bid Overcalls.