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Notrump Overcalls

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NOTRUMP OVERCALLS	
Direct: <u>15</u> to <u>18</u> Systems on	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conv.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Balancing: <u>12</u> to <u>15</u>	
Jump to 2NT: Minors	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Lowest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conv.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>2NT in balancing seat = 18-20</u>	

A 1NT overcall is roughly equal to a 1NT opening in HCP. The vulnerability is the guiding factor. If vulnerable, the range is closer to 16-18. If not vulnerable, 15-17 is more likely. Of course, a stopper in the opponent's suit (especially if a major) is presumed. After our 1NT overcall, we pretend that their opening bid never happened. So, "Systems On" – 100% "Front of Card."

Opp. We Opp. WE
1♠ 1NT Pass 2♦=Transfer to Hearts

If their responder acts after the 1NT overcall, we use the system we use for when they overcall our 1NT opening. [Example: (1♥) 1NT (2♠) -- Pretend we opened 1NT and they overcalled 2♠.]

In sandwich position, 1NT is natural/strong (many years ago, I played it as light takeout--but now, there are too many thieves out there and you need it as natural). So:

Opp. WE OPP. WE
1♦ Pass 1♠ 1NT=Strong/stoppers/balanced "15-18"

Our 2NT overcall (after their 2-level opening) shows a 1NT opening -- and is also influenced by the vulnerability. Of course, after a preempt, there are fewer options, so occasionally the 2NT-bidder could be off-shape. After our 2NT overcall, "Systems On." A 3NT overcall is natural, but very wide-ranging. I try not to remove a 3NT overcall without good reason, but if doing so, use 4♣=Stayman and 4♦/4♥ as Transfers (not the best system, but easy to remember, for the once a year that you'll use it).

A balancing 1NT is about a king less than a direct 1NT overcall. It is still "natural" and systems are still on. Even by a Passed Hand, 1NT in balancing seat is natural (about 10-11). Examples:

OPP. WE OPP. WE
1♥ Pass Pass 1NT = 12-15 (approx) - natural

OPP. WE OPP. WE
-- Pass 1♥ Pass
Pass 1NT= Nat (10/11)

Our jump overcall of 2NT shows the two lowest unbid suits. So, after they open 1-of-a-Major, the jump to 2NT shows both minors. After they open 1♦, the jump to 2NT shows ♣+♥. After they open 1♣, the jump to 2NT shows ♦+♥. The suit quality is vulnerability-dependent (sounder if vulnerable). Always, at least 5-5 is promised. The bid is assumed to be preemptive; try to avoid it with "medium hands."

A jump to 2NT in balancing seat (for example: 1♦-P-P-2NT) is Standard. Just to make sure everyone knows what Standard is, that means 18-20, balanced and natural (no preempting in balancing seat). Of course, after such a rare animal, systems are still on. Balancing as a passed-hand with 2NT is unusual (two-suited) [Example: P (2♠) P (P) 2NT].

For a full [LC Standard](#) card and a prettier version of this series, see [Bridge Winners](#).

Further Reading:

[What Should we Play?](#)