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SIMPLE OVERCALL

1 level 7 to 17 HCP (usually)
often 4 cards very light style

Responses

New Suit: Forcing NFConst NF
Jump Raise: Forcing Inv. Weak

Jump-Cue = Mixed Raise

"Simple" overcall means a non-jump overcall. The range shown is approximate and vulnerability- and level-dependent. When vulnerable, and especially on the 2-level or higher, the minimum range is higher. On the 1-level, white against red, I can see sticking in an overcall with AQ1098 of a suit and nothing else. On the 2-level, my overcall would tend to contain opening bid values and a decent suit. It is a common error to overcall the opponent's 1♠ opening with 2♦ holding, say: ♠J 3 2 ♥K 2 ♦K J 8 7 6 ♣K 3 2.

The upper range for a simple overcall is approximately 17. With more than 17, we will start with a double and then bid again.

I am not a fan of 4-card overcalls (they mess up partner's [Law of Total Tricks](#) usage--it makes it hard for him to judge competitive auctions). Still, there are exceptions. A great 4-card suit (AKJ9) when there is no other alternative, is possible.

After the overcall, there are many ways to go. It's hard to mark my suggested simple method by checking a box. After we overcall, a change of suit on the 1-level is natural and NF. Example:

WestNorth East South
1♦ 1♥ Pass 1♠

A change of suit on the 2+level is forcing one round. Example:

WestNorth East South
1♦ 1♥ Pass 2♣

A cue-bid guarantees (100%) support. Example:

WestNorth East South
1♦ 1♥ Pass 2♦

So, if you want to force in a new suit, you must bid it at the 2-level or higher. Some examples of what is forcing and what isn't should make the [LC Standard](#) treatment easy to see:

♠A Q J 9 8 ♥2 ♦A 4 3 2 ♣A J 7 : After (1♦)-1♥-(P)-?? You can't risk 1♠ (NF) and can't cue-bid (guarantees hearts), so bid 2♠. (Not pretty, I know, but this situation won't come up much and it makes the rest of the framework easy to use).

♠A Q 9 8 ♥A Q 2 ♦4 3 ♣6 5 4 2 : After (1♦)-1♥-(P)-?? Bid 2♦ to show hearts, invitational+ (no need to show spades).

♠5 4 ♥K Q J 9 8 ♦A 3 2 ♣J 3 2 : After (1♠)-2♣-(P)-?? Bid 2♥ (forcing 1-round, since on 2+ level)

♠Q 5 4 3 ♥Q J 9 8 7 ♦K 2 ♣5 4 : After (1♣)-1♦-(P)-?? Bid 1♥ NF

As usual with [LC Standard](#), this isn't necessarily the 100% perfect set of agreements, but it is 90% effective and very easy to memorize. Whether or not you agree with the theory is not important. There are pros and cons to any method. Best is "transfer-advances" but they cause a headache. Also, as usual, please send any complex alternatives to my Antarctica office. Speaking of which, here is something that might be considered complex (part of [LC Standard](#)), but doesn't involve any risk of forgetting:

Jump Cue = Mixed Raise A fun tool which I recommend as part of [LC Standard](#) is to use a jump-cue as a mixed raise. "Mixed" means 4-card support with more than a preemptive raise, but less than limit. The jump-cue means that you cue-bid their suit by jumping. Example: (1♦)-1♠-(P)-3♦ [♠K J 7 6 ♥A 5 4 3 ♦3 2 ♣7 6 4 With, say: ♠5 4 ♥K 6 5 4 ♦A J 4 3 ♣4 3 2, it's nice to be able to jump to 3♣ (mixed) after the start of: (1♣)-1♥-(Dbl)-?? This jump-cue is often forgotten by inexperienced players, but not fatal (the overcaller will not think this is a natural bid.) The big forget comes in failing to make the bid.

Summary of what our bids mean after we overcall: New suits on 2+ level are forcing. New suits on 1 level are NF. Cue-bid guarantees support (invitational or better). A jump raise, of course, is weak. A jump-cue is a mixed raise (if remembered).

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

Further reading:

[What Should we Play?](#)