



The 24-part Bidding Toolkit series is available online at [www.acbl.org/play/commonlyusedconventions.html](http://www.acbl.org/play/commonlyusedconventions.html).

## Overcalls – part 2

Overcalls at the one-level were discussed last month. An overcall interferes with your opponents' bidding, invites partner into the auction and helps your partner on defense.

### Responding with support

Your partner overcalls and you have at least three-card support — how should you proceed? Raising partner is the first priority. Here are some guidelines:

1. Make a simple raise with 6 to 10 support points. Support points refer to high-card points plus points added for distribution.
2. With 11-plus support points, cuebid the suit the opponent opened.
3. With 4 to 6 support points and four or more trumps, make a preemptive jump raise.

#### Example #1:

Suppose you hold:

♠K 5 2 ♥10 6 5 ♦A 10 4 2 ♣J 4 3

and it's your turn to bid:

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	?

You have support for partner, so bid 2♠. It's true that you have diamonds stopped, but don't bid 1NT. It's more important to show partner your support.

#### Example #2:

You hold:

♠K 6 4 2 ♥K 10 6 ♦A 9 4 2 ♣4 3,

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	?

Bid 2♦. You have 10 HCP plus one point for your doubleton club. Your 11 support points is a limit raise.

#### Example #3:

Suppose your hand is stronger:

♠K 7 4 2 ♥A K 4 ♦A 4 ♣J 4 3 2.

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♠	Pass	?

Again cuebid 2♦. This promises a limit raise, but may be better.

#### Example #4:

What if you have good support, but you are weak? You hold:

♠K 10 4 2 ♥4 2 ♦10 4 ♣Q 7 5 4 2.

Bid 3♠. This is preemptive and weak. You have the requisite four trumps. Your hand is weak in terms of HCP (and defense), but you have distributional values. The 3♠ bid sends that message to partner, and obstructs the opponents.

### Rebidding after overcalling

After you overcall, partner should let you know if he has support. Your overcall may be based on a wide range in terms of strength. After a cuebid, therefore, you have to tell partner how strong you are. If you are strong enough to make game opposite a limit raise, you should bid it. If you have a weak overcall (less than an opening bid), you should repeat your suit. If you have a hand that is in between, you should make a bid in a new suit, one that may be only three cards long.

Here are some examples. In each case, the bidding has proceeded:

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	?

#### Example #1:

♠A Q 10 4 3 ♥4 3 ♦K 8 4 ♣10 5 3.

Rebid 2♠. Your hand is too weak to make game if partner has only

limit-raise strength. If he has enough to make game opposite this hand, he will bid again.

#### Example #2:

♠A Q 10 4 3 ♥7 3 ♦A K 4 ♣K J 10.

Rebid 4♠. Partner has a limit raise (or better) so you accept his invitation.

#### Example #3:

♠A Q 10 4 3 ♥5 3 ♦A 8 4 ♣K 10 4

Rebid 2♦. The message this sends to partner is that you do not have enough to go directly to game as in example #2, but you do not have a weak overcall as in example #1. If partner has a minimum limit raise, he can sign off in 2♠ and you can pass. If partner has more than invitational values, he can bid 4♠. Notice that you only have a three-card diamond suit. This will often be the case. You have a known spade fit, so you are not trying to play diamonds.

### Responses when you don't have support

Often you will not have support for partner after he overcalls. If you have a stopper in the opponent's suit, you can bid notrump with 7 to 10 (or 11) HCP. If you have a good suit of your own, you can bid it.

Here are two examples. In both cases the auction has proceeded:

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	Pass	?

#### Example #1:

♠J 3 ♥K J 4 3 ♦K 10 3 ♣J 10 8 4.

Bid 1NT. You have enough strength to act, and you have a stopper and a balanced hand.

#### Example #2:

♠8 3 ♥K Q 3 ♦J 3 ♣K Q 9 8 4 2.

Bid 2♣. You have 11 HCP and a good suit.

In both examples, if you pass 1♠, you may miss game if partner has a good overcall. If partner rebids spades, you can pass. You have shown your hand. □