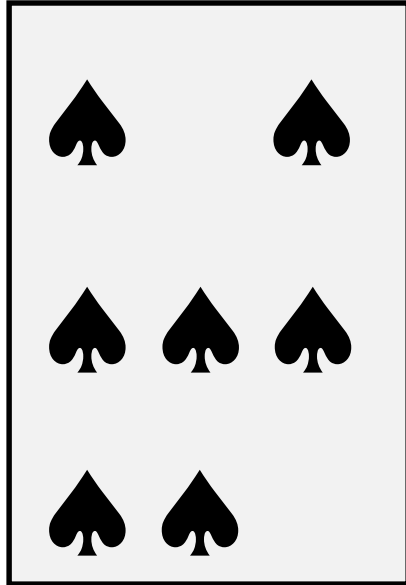


Spank me

“If you have the slightest touch of masochism,
you will love this game”.

- *Victor Mollo*



seven

Overcalls

Jump overcall

Responding to an overcall

Take-out double

Responding to a take-out double

Competitive bidding

Battle of bids

Thus far in this book, the bidding has been between just you and your partner, with the opponents remaining silent. In real life Bridge, the auction is often contested with a battle of bids between the two sides. When partner opens 1NT we have a structured set of responses. Same holds true if she opens 1♣, 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠. With competitive bidding there is also a set bidding structure.

There are two ways to get into the auction once the opponents have opened the bidding.

- One is to '**overcall**' with a suit bid or with a no-trump bid.
- The second way is to make a '**take-out double**'.

Guide to making an overcall

In the following three auctions your RHO opened the bidding with 1♥ and you have made an **overcall** as indicated.

1)	2)	3)
RHO You	RHO You	RHO You
1♥ 1♠	1♥ 2♣	1♥ 1NT

1. A **one-level** overcall promises a decent 5+ card suit and 8-16 points.
You might have: ♠AK1084 ♥J109 ♦42 ♣1074
2. An overcall at the **two-level** (non-jump) promises a 6+ card suit (or very good five-card suit) and 11-16 points.
You might have: ♠76 ♥AJ3 ♦43 ♣KQJ974
3. A **1NT overcall** is the same as if you had opened 1NT except you could have a point more. 15 - 18 HCP with a stopper(s) in the opponent's suit.
You might have: ♠K3 ♥AQ8 ♦QJ10 ♣KQ932

Jump to conclusions

RHO opens 1♦ and you hold: ♠AQ10943 ♥32 ♦854 ♣98. You have a weak hand, but a good six-card suit. Conclusion: If spades were trumps your hand is smashing. With a weak hand and a long suit, make a **jump overcall**. With the above hand, jump overcall 2♠. A jump overcall at the two-level shows a six-card suit and 6-9 points. By jumping in the auction, you have usurped valuable bidding space from the opponents.

Guide to responding to an overcall

The opponents have opened the bidding, your partner has overcalled at the one-level and it is now your bid.

With support for partner's major suit overcall

<u>HCP</u>		<u>LHO</u>	<u>Partner</u>	<u>RHO</u>	<u>You</u>
8-11	Raise partner.	1♣	1♠	pass	2♠
12-14	Jump raise partner.	1♦	1♠	pass	3♠
15+	Bid game.	1♥	1♠	pass	4♠

Without support

8+	Bid a new suit of your own with 5+ cards and a decent suit.
8-11	1NT - shows a stopper(s) in the opponent's suit.
12-14	2NT - shows a stopper(s) in the opponent's suit.
15+	3NT - shows a stopper(s) in the opponent's suit.

With support for partner's minor suit overcall

When responding to partner's minor suit overcall it is still best to bid a major suit if you have one, provided you have 8+ points and a good suit. If you do not have a major suit you can always raise partner's minor suit with a fit (same as the point scale for raising partner's major suit overcall). Not to steer you away from playing in a minor suit, but if you do have a stopper in the opponents suit you could bid no trump, following the guide above.

Pass Nothing constructive to say and denies any of the above.

Ponder responder's strength

Note how you need more strength to respond to an overcall than you do to an opening bid. This is because partner can make a suit overcall with less strength than needed to open the bidding with a suit.

Raise partner's opening bid of a major: 1♥ - 2♥ (2♥ shows 6-9).

Raise partner's major suit overcall: 1♣ - 1♥ - pass - 2♥ (2♥ shows 8-11).

Guide to making a take-out double

Sometimes you will have a hand that is not suitable for an overcall, but you still want to compete for the auction. Your RHO opens the bidding 1♥ and you hold:

♠K984 ♥2 ♦AK104 ♣KJ62

With no five-card suit to overcall, there is another option. A **take-out double** (X) asking partner to bid one of the un-bid suits. With the above hand, after RHO opened 1♥, your take-out double promises:

- 1) 11+ points
- 2) Shortage in the opponent's suit (less than three cards).
- 3) Tolerance for the three un-bid suits (emphasis on the majors).

The emphasis of a take-out double is in 'take-out'. Partner wants you to take it out to a preferred suit. By making a bid, your response has taken out the double. If you were to pass, the takeout double becomes a 'penalty double'. Not what partner intended.

Note: If you do have a big hand of 17+ points (too strong to overcall), the requirements for a take-out double are relaxed, and you do not need tolerance for all three un-bid suits. You do need a suit to 'run' to should your partner bid a suit you cannot tolerate. Your RHO opens the bidding 1♣ and you X with this hand: ♠ AKQ10983 ♥ AK73 ♦ 3 ♣ 2. You have no tolerance for diamonds; however, if partner does bid diamonds, you could safely bid spades with your strong suit and powerful hand. When partner makes a takeout double, you must respond!

Guide to responding to a take-out double

0-8	A new suit response. 1♦ - X - pass - 2♣
9-10	Jump-bid in a new suit. 1♣- X - pass - 2♥
11-12	Jump to 3 level in a suit. 1♣ - X - pass - 3♥
13+	Jump to game in a suit: 1♦ - X - pass - 4♠
6-9	Bid 1NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit.
10-12	Bid 2NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit.
13-15	Bid 3NT with a stopper in the opponent's suit.



At the table

Your RHO has opened the bidding with 1♥ and it is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
♠ KQ84	♠ KJ1095	♠ KJ10	♠ 82	♠ AQ73
♥ 7	♥ 94	♥ AQ4	♥ AQJ93	♥ 73
♦ K842	♦ K2	♦ K83	♦ K73	♦ 1093
♣ A984	♣ A983	♣ QJ105	♣ K97	♣ AK73

- Hand 1** **Double (X)** This hand is a textbook take-out double. You show a hand with shortness in the opponent's suit, tolerance for all three un-bid suits and 11+ points. Nice.
- Hand 2** **Bid 1♠.** With a five-card suit, it is best to overcall, thus telling partner you have 5+ spades and 8 - 16 points.
- Hand 3** **Bid 1NT.** With a balanced 15 - 18 points and a stopper in hearts you can show your hand by overcalling 1NT. Partner is now in charge because she knows a lot about your hand, while you know nothing about her hand.
- Hand 4** **Pass.** You cannot overcall because you do not have a five-card suit (other than the opponent's suit). You have the wrong shape for a take-out double. Whenever the opponents open with your longest suit it is generally best to pass and wait for further developments.
- Hand 5** **Double (X).** You have shortage in hearts, 11+ points and tolerance for the un-bid suits. The three-card diamond suit is the minimum length to satisfy the requirements of the term 'tolerance'.

Doubler's next bid?

Question: After you have made a take-out double asking partner to bid, what do you do next?

Answer: Add your values to the values your partner reveals with her response and take appropriate action. If there are values for game, bid it. If there is still a chance for game, invite partner to bid higher. If there is no chance for game, then pass. Simple addition is often all that is required when the hand strength and preferred suit are known.

Card play technique

The hold up play

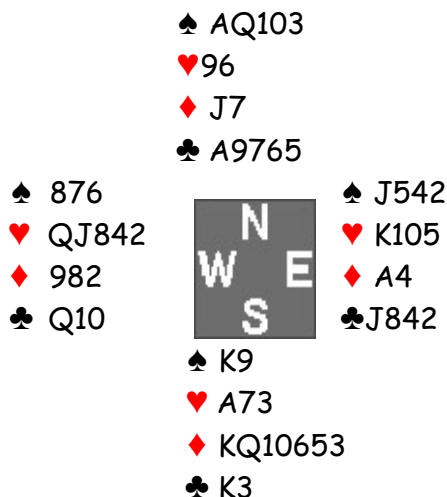


figure 7:1

In figure 7:1 S is in 3NT. W led the ♥4 (fourth best from her longest and strongest). Dummy offered the ♥6, E the ♥K (third hand plays high) and it is S to play. There are two scenarios to consider. Firstly, S wins the ♥A on the first round and secondly S makes a **hold up** play, and wins the ♥A on the third round. In the first scenario, S wins the ♥A immediately and tackles diamonds. Upon winning the ♦A, E will return a heart to W who will cash four heart tricks, promptly defeating 3NT by a trick. (-50) In the second scenario, S delays winning her ♥A until the third round and then tackles diamonds. (It is important to note that E has only three hearts). When E wins the ♦A she is fresh out of hearts. Your hold up play in hearts has depleted E of hearts and her ability to communicate with W in the heart suit. Contract making with an over-trick. **+430**

This is a 'hold-up'

The purpose of the hold-up play is to 'snip' communications between the opponents in a particular suit. Against no trump, the opponents tend to lead their longest suit. Say the opponents lead clubs against 3NT. They have eight clubs between them and you have one stopper (♣A). If the opposing clubs breaks 4-4 the 'principle of equal length' states the opponents will always have relevant communication in the suit. If, however the suits breaks 5-3, (unequal length) the hold-up play could disrupt lines of communication. By holding up on your ♣A until the third round, the opponent who had only three clubs is now void. If this same opponent later wins a trick, communications in clubs have been severed.

Department of defence

Attitude

When partner leads a suit, there is a way of letting partner know what your **attitude** is about the suit that has been led. "I like that lead" or "I do not like that lead". Your attitude about partner's lead can be revealed in the card you choose to follow suit with. A low spot card says, "I love your lead" while a high spot card says, "I hate your lead". A spot card includes the 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and the 10.

Low I Love, High I Hate

You hold: ♠ K862 ♥ 83 ♦ Q73 ♣ 6543 and partner leads the ♠Q.

With the above hand play the ♠2 (a small card) to say "I like your lead", **Low I Love (LIL)**. You love partner's lead because you have the ♠K and want the suit continued. If partner had led the ♣A, you would follow with the ♣6 saying, "I do not like that lead", **High I Hate (HIH)**. You do not want to encourage more club leads based on your poor club holding.

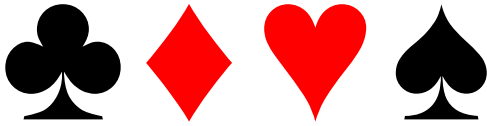
At the table

What is your attitude after partner leads the ♣K.

♣ 8743	♣ 8	Let partner know how you feel about clubs. (HIH)
♣ A843	♣ 3	You are delighted with partner's lead. (LIL)
♣ J832	♣ 2	Partner promises the ♣Q, you have the ♣J. (LIL)
♣ 9876	♣ 9	You want to discourage clubs. (HIH)

Reveal your attitude after partner leads the ♥Q.

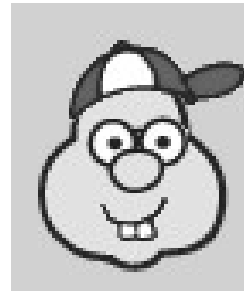
♥ 10832	♥ 2	The ♥10 is reason enough to encourage. (LIL)
♥ 843	♥ 8	You are not interested in hearts. (HIH)
♥ K83	♥ 3	My ♥K loves your ♥Q. (LIL)
♥ 432	♥ 4	The ♥4 is a high card and is discouraging. (HIH)



Summary

- Bridge is not a one-sided game. Like any auction you attend, the goods (contracts) are up for grabs to the highest bidder. **Competitive bidding** is part and parcel with most Bridge hands.
- One way of competing in the auction is to **overcall**. Make sure your suit is good and is at least five cards in length.
- If you do not have a 5+ card suit, you may try a **take-out double**. A take-out double is signified by an X.
- Do not be afraid to allow the opponents to win a few tricks, especially if it eventually benefits your side. The **hold-up play** is an oft used card play technique used to snip communications between the opponents.
- Give me **attitude!** You are on defence 50% of the time. Learning how to signal with partner will garner positive results immediately.

Nearly Normal Norman
When partner responds to your take-out double or overcall, if you can remember what strength of hand the response shows, simply add it to the value of your hand and Bob's your uncle!



Nearly Normal Norman

Competition

“Competition is good, but if you make every game a life and death proposition, you're going to have problems. For one thing, you'll be dead a lot.”

- Dean Smith

Exercises - chapter seven

A. RHO opened the bidding with 1♦. It is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ AQ983	♠ 10983	♠ K76	♠ 74
♥ 65	♥ AK95	♥ A64	♥ 5
♦ Q4	♦ A5	♦ KJ53	♦ AJ843
♣ A872	♣ Q73	♣ KQ2	♣ AK982

B. LHO opened the bidding 1♥, partner made a take-out X and RHO passed. It is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ A10954	♠ 1095	♠ 94	♠ AQ984
♥ A3	♥ AQ4	♥ 1096	♥ 1076
♦ 865	♦ K54	♦ 98754	♦ K32
♣ 542	♣ 10942	♣ 1032	♣ A5

C. Your LHO opened the bidding with 1♥, your partner overcalled 1♠, and RHO passed. It is your bid.

1)	2)	3)	4)
♠ A64	♠ 973	♠ 42	♠ 3
♥ J3	♥ A83	♥ K985	♥ 732
♦ K1032	♦ KQ43	♦ Q74	♦ K973
♣ Q1098	♣ AJ4	♣ AQ74	♣ AKQ82

