

ENTERING THE BIDDING AFTER A WEAK TWO-BID

When the opponents open the bidding, you can enter the bidding with an overcall or a double. An overcall says that you have a good suit of your own. A double says that you can support any of the un-bid suits. For hands less than 17 points, the distinction between a double and an overcall is one of shape, not strength. With 17 or more HCP, the hand is too strong for an overcall. You must double first, then bid your suit.

Overcalls over Weak Two-Bids

An opening hand is required for an overcall at the two-level. You may count one point for the fifth and each additional card in your suit. Do not count points for short suits. The suit must be of good quality. While we do not count points for 10's 9's and 8's, they are an important intangible factor in the quality of a suit.

Hands (a) and (b) would be a suitable overcall after a bid of 2♦ but not after 2♠. Hand (c) is not suitable for an overcall over 2♦ or 2♥ because the suit is too shabby, especially if you are vulnerable.

(a)		(b)		(c)	
♠	A 6	♠	A 6	♠	A 8 6 5 2
♥	A K J 9 8	♥	A Q J 9 8 6	♥	K 8
♦	9 6	♦	9 6	♦	J 7
♣	10 8 5	♣	10 8 5	♣	K Q 4 2

To overcall at the three-level requires 15 points. Hands (d) and (e) would be suitable for an overcall over an opening bid of 2♠.

Hand (f) is too strong for an overcall. With this hand you must double first and show your suit on the next round.

(d)		(e)		(f)	
♠	10 2	♠	A 6	♠	A K J 8 7
♥	J 10 5	♥	A Q 10 9 8	♥	3 2
♦	A 6	♦	9 5	♦	A Q 5
♣	A K Q 9 7 4	♣	K Q 4 2	♣	A 9 6

Take-out Doubles

Hands (g) and (h) represent a minimum double of a 2♥ opening bid. Counting points for distribution, each hand is worth 13 support points. The double strongly suggests spades and a point should be deducted if the spade suit has only three cards.

Hand (f) is a minimum double of a 2♠ opening bid. Partner will be obliged to respond at the three-level. Fifteen support points are required. You should have cards in the heart suit and the quality of the spot cards is important.

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(g)		(h)		(i)	
♠	K Q 7 6	♠	A 10 8 5	♠	9 7
♥	8	♥	10 6	♥	A K J 8
♦	K 10 4 3	♦	Q 9 4	♦	A 10 8 6
♣	Q 9 7 4	♣	A Q 6 2	♣	Q 9 6

Risk Versus Gain

There is risk involved in entering the bidding at the two-level or three-level but the potential gain justifies the risk. Actually, there is a high probability that your partner has some points. Opener has about 8 points and if you have 16, there are about still 16 points unaccounted for. You should expect partner to have about half of them. By the same token, your partner shouldn't get excited with 7 points because she knows that's what you expect her to have. With 10 or more points, she should think about game.

Action By Opener's Partner

A single raise by the partner of the opening bidder is pre-emptive, not invitational. The opener must pass. It can be made on a weak hand with length in the suit. It could be made on more than 10 points with a doubleton honour. It is an ambiguous bid. You could have a hand just short of game going values. The opponents must be wary about competing. If your partner opens 2♥, bid 3♥ with hands (j) and (k) and 4♥ with hand (l).

(j)		(k)		(l)	
♠	7 6	♠	A 10 8 5	♠	9
♥	Q 8 5 3	♥	Q 6	♥	Q 8 7 5 2
♦	K 10 4 3	♦	Q 9 4	♦	A 10 8 6
♣	K 7 4	♣	K J 6 2	♣	Q 9 6