

Weak Jump Overcalls

Those who play weak-two openings often choose to play weak-jump-overcalls as well, because they show their partner the same type of hand – a 6 card suit with no more than 10 points and virtually all those points in that suit (SQT = 8+). It is pre-emptive, so, if playing weak jump overcalls, a jump overcall in the protective position is strong (16-18 HCP – you have no one to pre-empt).

Note: with a 7 card suit and less than 11 HCP you would make a double jump, as per an opening 3 level pre-empt).

When playing weak-jump-overcalls you forego the intermediate-jump-overcall showing a 12-15 HCP with 6+ card support. You are much more likely to have the weak version, but if you have a hand suitable for an intermediate-jump overcall then you have to make a simple overcall. You are unlikely to miss game because if partner has 10+ HCP and 3+ card support she should cue-bid opener's suit (make an Unassuming Cue Bid).

The weak jump overcall is destructive, to disrupt the opponent's bidding. It is risky – you could end up getting doubled for penalties - so you need to keep an eye on the vulnerability to ensure that your "sacrifice" doesn't turn into a debacle! Going off two tricks vulnerable scores -500! The following table gives a good guide to the minimum requirements for a weak jump overcall.

Weak Jump Overcall	Favourable Vulnerability	Equal Vulnerability	Unfavourable Vulnerability
At 2 level	6 card suit; SQT = 8+; 9 losers	6 card suit; SQT = 8+; 8 losers;	6 card suit, SQT = 8+; 7 losers;
At 3 level	7 card suit; SQT = 9+; 8 losers;	7 card suit, SQT = 9+; 7 losers	7 card suit, SQT = 9+; 6 losers

Examples: (In each case East is overcalling North's 1♣.)

East

♠ K Q J 7 5 3
♥ 8 5
♦ 8 7
♣ 7 6 4

Bid 2♠ (any vulnerability). East has 6 spades; 8 losers; 6 HCP; SQT = 9. Perfect for a weak jump overcall. If North had not bid East would have opened 2♠.

East

♠ 5 4
♥ 8 5
♦ K Q 10 8 7 2
♣ 7 6 4

Bid 2♦. East has 6 diamonds; 8 losers (5 playing tricks - maybe); 8 HCP; SQT = 8. If North had not bid East would have opened 2♦.

East

♠ A J 9
♥ Q 7 5 4 3 2
♦ A 7 5
♣ 7

Bid 1♥. East has 6 hearts; 11 HCP; SQT = 7. Too strong for a weak jump overcall and heart suit quality not good enough either. If North had not bid East would not have opened 2♥.

Responding to partner's Weak Jump Overcall

A. Raise partner's suit:

Bid "to the level of the fit", but remember that partner's overcall has served its purpose, so don't rush in unnecessarily. All direct raises are still pre-emptive so potentially sacrificial. If you are very strong with a fit, and game might be possible, use a forcing cue bid of enemy suit.

West	East	N	E	S	W
♠ 10 4 2	♠ K Q J 7 5 3	1♥	2♠	3♥	3♠
♥ K 7	♥ 8 6 2				
♦ K Q J 7 4	♦ 8 7				
♣ 9 8 3	♣ Q J				

You will go one off if the heart finesse doesn't succeed, but the opponents would probably have made 3♥.

West	East	N	E	S	W
♠ A 4 2	♠ K Q J 7 5 3	1♥	2♠	P	3♥
♥ A 7	♥ 8 7 6	P	4♠		
♦ K Q 9 6 4	♦ 8 7				
♣ K 9 3	♣ Q J				

West has 16 HCP and a spade fit. Cue bidding the opponent's suit asks partner to bid game with a "good" hand. With 9 HCP and a spade SQT of 9, East obliges.

B. Bid a new suit: constructive (do not rescue with a weak hand). A bid of a new suit is natural and non-forcing, typically showing a 6-card suit and denying support for partner's suit.

C: Bid 2NT (Conventional): forcing, asking partner to describe his hand. With a weak hand (5-7 HCP) partner rebids his suit. With 8-10 points partner shows a feature.