

Lesson 6: Practise your Overcalls

(Not playing Stayman or Transfers)

Print off and fold down the middle.

<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>1</th> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	1	West	North	East	South		1♦	Pass	Pass	?	♠ K9872 ♥ J752 ♦ A92 ♣ 6	Pass You have sufficient honour strength (8+) to overcall, but your SQOT is only 6 (Five spades + one spade honour). You need a SQOT that is at least the same as the number of tricks you are bidding to make, here seven.
1	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	Pass	Pass	?								
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2	West	North	East	South								
			1♠	?								
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3	West	North	East	South								
			1♥	?								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>4</th> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	4	West	North	East	South				1♣	?	♠ KQJ86 ♥ 7 ♦ Q743 ♣ 965	1♠ A classic 1-level overcall - lovely spades with a SQOT of 8 and 8 HCP, and good shape. The singleton heart offers ruffing potential. Overcalls in spades are especially disruptive. If West had been planning to bid diamonds or hearts she will now have to do so at the 2-level instead of at the 1-level, and may not be strong enough to bid.
4	West	North	East	South								
			1♣	?								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>5</th> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	5	West	North	East	South				1♠	?	♠ 6 ♥ KQ1092 ♦ K3 ♣ Q8542	2♥ Your hand satisfies the requirement for a 2-Level overcall, opening values and a SQOT of 8+. If you added a 6 th heart (removing a club) then the SQOT would be 9 but it would not follow that you should bid to make 9 tricks (3♥). You would still overcall 2♥.
5	West	North	East	South								
			1♠	?								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>6</th> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	6	West	North	East	South				1♥	?	♠ K943 ♥ KJ9 ♦ Q43 ♣ AK2	1NT To overcall 1NT you need a good stopper in opener's suit and 16+ HCP (or a good 15 HCP). If you are declarer in a No-Trump contract then West will almost certainly lead East's suit (hearts) and your ♥K will win the first or second round of hearts.
6	West	North	East	South								
			1♥	?								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>7</th> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	7	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	Pass	?	♠ Q72 ♥ J7642 ♦ K762 ♣ 9	2♠ You know that partner has 5+ spades so you have a spade fit. Your bid shows 3+ card spade support and modest values (6-11 points including shortage).
7	West	North	East	South								
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?								

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8	West	North	East	South								
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>9</th> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	9	West	North	East	South		1♣	1♠	Pass	?	♠ 76 ♥ AK4 ♦ J987 ♣ K983	1NT You do not have 3 card support for partner's spades but you do have 11 HCP, a stopper in opener's club suit and a balanced hand. To respond in No Trumps to partner's 1♠ overcall you need roughly three more points than the 6-9 points you would need if partner had opened 1♠, i.e. 9-12 HCP. With 13-14 HCP and at least one good stopper (preferably two) you would bid 2NT. With a 16 HCP or good 15 HCP and two good club stoppers you would bid 3NT.
9	West	North	East	South								
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>10</th> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	10	West	North	East	South				1♥	?	♠ Q5 ♥ 952 ♦ KJ53 ♣ AKJ6	Pass You would happily open 1NT with this hand but as an overcaller you have to pass. You don't have a 5-card suit and you are not strong enough to overcall 1NT, which would require 16 HCP (or a good 15) and a heart stopper, of which you have neither. Your hand is more suited to defence, where you will be sitting over opener.
10	West	North	East	South								
			1♥	?								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>11</th> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	11	West	North	East	South		1♦	1NT	Pass	?	♠ KJ8632 ♥ AK2 ♦ 74 ♣ 42	4♠ You have an 8-card fit (partner has a balanced hand so at least two spades) and 11 points. You have a spade fit and the values for game opposite partner's 16+ HCP.
11	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	1NT	Pass	?								
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12	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	1NT	Pass	?								
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13	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	1NT	Pass	?								
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14	West	North	East	South								
	1♦	1NT	Pass	?								