

Last week we had a look at the NT overcall (and double followed by a NT bid). We'll continue the theme this week by saying what we do with other very strong hand types when the RHO has opened the bidding.

Double and then introduce a new suit

Hand 1 What do you do with a hand like this if RHO opens 1♥?

 It really is much too good for a simple 1♠ overcall (about 7-16 pts) and

♠ AQJ764 the way to show this type of strong single suited hand is to double first.

♥ KJ9 Partner will assume that it's a normal take-out double and suppose he responds

♦ K10 2♣. You then bid 2♠, that shows a hand that was too strong to simply initially

♣ A9 overcall 1♠.

Incidentally, some players would simply overcall 2♠ with this hand (the strong jump overcall) but most players play weak jump overcalls these days (I'll cover them at a later date) and so we double first with these strong hands.

The direct bid of 3NT

Now if RHO opens say 1♥ and you have 25+ points with ♥ stops then I guess that you could simply bid 3NT, but I would still double first and then bid NT (I cover that next page) - even with 25 points you probably won't make 3NT with a bust partner. So what is the best use of a direct 3NT bid?

Hand 2 What do you do with a hand like this if RHO opens 1♥?

 Partner is probably bust and you have 9 tricks on any lead, so bid 3NT.

♠ A4 You all know me, why bother to mention ♣'s when 3NT is making?

♥ K3 The direct 3NT bid is virtually always this type of hand – a long running

♦ A7 minor suit with all other suits stopped.

♣ AKQJ965

The direct bid of 3 of the opponent's suit

Now a bid of the opponent's suit is hardly ever natural. So what does a jump to 3♥ mean?

Hand 3 What do you do with a hand like this if RHO opens 1♥?

 You want to be in 3NT if partner has a ♥ stop, but how do you find out?

♠ AJ The answer is that a jump to the 3 level in the opponent's suit shows a long

♥ 54 running minor and demands that partner bid 3NT with a stop.

♦ A7 If partner has as little as ♠xxx ♥J10xx ♦xxx ♣xxx he must bid 3NT.

♣ AKQJ965 And note the advantage of this bid if partner has something like ♥Kx; that is only a stop if he is declarer!

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- Hand 5: 3NT. You are guaranteed 9 tricks on any lead provided that you are declarer.
- Hand 6: 3♦. You have the same 9 guaranteed tricks as hand 5, but you need partner to stop the ♦'s from running. So the 3♦ bid demands that he bid 3NT with a ♦ stop. Note that partner knows your hand type pretty exactly; with no ♦ stop he will convert to 4♣ and if he's got a few points (two major suit kings would be nice) with no stop he should bid 5♣. If he has a *very good* 5+ card major suit (with no ♦ stop) then he can bid it.
- Hand 7: 1NT. 15-18.
- Hand 8: Double, followed by 1NT over partner's 1♥ response. 19-21.
- Hand 9: Double, followed by 2NT over partner's 1♥ response. 22-25.
- Hand 10: Pass. You have the values for 1NT but it will play badly. This hand is much more suited to defend a possible ♥ contract and who knows, somebody may get a double in later in the auction.
- Hand 11: 1♠.
- Hand 12: Double, followed by a ♠ bid. This hand is too strong for a simple 1♠ overcall.
- Hand 13: Double, followed by pass over a non-jump 1♥ response as this is a minimal double and partner has not promised any points.
- Hand 14: Double, followed by pass. It would be nice to have both majors for the double but this hand is a bit too good for an initial pass. Note that you cannot 'correct' partner's 1♥ bid to 1♠ or 2♣ as that would promise a much stronger hand.
- Hand 15: 1♠. It's playable in the other three suits and so some would double, but I much prefer to overcall with a 5 card major than to double.
- Hand 16: 1♠. Now this is a tricky one and many would prefer to double, but the expert opinion these days is to overcall when 5-4 in the majors. I won't argue if you chose double.