

## Overcalling the opponents opening bids

It might be instructive to consider what we hope to achieve with an overcall .  
These three reasons are usually cited :

- 1) to play and make a contract
- 2) to suggest to partner which suit to lead {should the opponents play the final contract}
- 3) to suggest a possible sacrifice to partner

{{ actually there is a fourth reason that some players would consider and that is :

- 4) to be a nuisance

Personally I don't find that a very laudable ambition but if that's your personality type so be it }}

Ideally one should find overcalls that are consistent with the above first 3 aims.

- 1) to play and make a contract

Say the opponents have bid 1Sp.

|    |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|
| N  | E | S | W |
| 1S | ? |   |   |

Look at these 3 hands :-

- |        |        |         |
|--------|--------|---------|
| a) 4   | b) KJ8 | c) A4   |
| AQ3    | QJ9    | K6      |
| KQJ876 | A8765  | J107652 |
| 654    | Q5     | 543     |

well we will have to bid at the 2 level and should consider what chances we have of making 8 tricks .

{a} even opposite a partner with very little you should be able to make 6/7 tricks

{b} you have more points but it is uncertain how many tricks you might make  
{on a bad day perhaps only 3 or 4 }

{c} this hand is seriously short in points but might scramble 5 tricks

Obviously {a} is the best hand hand to overcall with from the point of view of actually making a contract.

We could say that in general to make or *get close to making* an 8 trick contract we need :

- **approx 10 ----15 pts**
- **a six card suit**
- **approximately 6 or 7 playing tricks.**

{{ if we are thinking of overcalling at the 1 level then we might relax the requirements for a six card suit and bid a five card suit as we only need to make 7 tricks }}.

Notice that the overcall must be close to making the bid contract on its own merits