

Defence to a 1NT opening bid: Landy

Often, when the opponent has opened 1NT, you will want to bid but will have a two-suited hand. Indeed, it is often the extra playing strength provided by the second suit that makes your hand worth a bid in the first place.

To cater for this sort of hand, some partnerships play that an overcall of 2♣ shows this sort of hand: similar strength to an overcall in a suit but with both major suits. This is known as the **Landy** convention. It enables a player with a two-suited hand in the majors to compete more easily. The drawback is that you no longer have available a natural overcall of 2♣.

On balance it is worth this concession, as a player overcalling on the strength of a good minor suit may well find himself outbid anyway if the opening side have effective competitive methods. It is more useful to be able to overcall showing both majors than to have a natural 2♣ bid available over 1NT.

Using this Landy convention, an overcall of 2♣ shows:

- at least 9 cards in the majors
- about 8-15 points (the better the shape, the fewer points are needed)

Other overcalls (and a double) retain their natural meaning.

Here are some examples of Landy in action:

West	North	East	South
1NT	?		

♠ K J 10 7
♥ A Q 8 7 6
♦ 8 6
♣ Q 5

Bid 2♣. Being able to show both majors increases your chance of finding a fit with partner. With equal length in the two suits, partner bids 2♦ asking you to choose. If not playing Landy, a 2♥ overcall is dubious

♠ K J 10 7 6
♥ A 9 8 7 6 5
♦ 6
♣ 5

Bid 2♣. This hand is suitable for a Landy overcall even though you have only 8 points, as this 6-5 hand has good playing strength if partner has a fit for either of the suits.

♠ K Q J 10 7
♥ A K 7 6
♦ A 6
♣ 8 5

Double. This hand is too good for a 2♣ (Landy) overcall. If the opponents rescue themselves into 2 of a minor, and partner does not double this for penalties, bid 2♠

♠ K J 8 7
 ♥ 6
 ♦ A Q 10 6
 ♣ Q J 10 5

Pass. You do not have both major suits, none of your suits is good enough for an overcall, and your hand does not have the strength to double. This hand is more suited to a different defensive method!

Responding to a Landy 2♣ overcall

With a fit in one of partner's major suits, responder should simply bid the suit that he prefers. With enough values to invite game (about an opening hand) responder jumps to 3 of the preferred major, and on a stronger hand he could jump straight to game.

With no fit, responder may bid 2NT (invitational) or, with values for game, 3♣ over the conventional 2♣ (forcing).

When responding to partner's Landy overcall, remember that queens and jacks in the minor suits are often not worth much as partner is likely to be short in the suit. Aces (and, to a lesser extent, kings) are good cards.

West	North	East	South
1NT	2♣	pass	?

♠ A 10 6 3
 ♥ K 4
 ♦ A 6 5 2
 ♣ 8 5 3

Jump to 4♠. The three picture cards (and the ♠10) are all useful, whereas queens and jacks in the minors may well be wasted values. Game is a good bet even if partner is minimum.

♠ J 9
 ♥ 6 3
 ♦ K Q J 7 4
 ♣ A J 10 5

This time the hands do not fit too well. An invitational bid of 2NT (natural) is best – partner could have 13 or 14 points, so pass is a little timid (although it could be best if your partner tends to bid on tram tickets!)