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(172) Competitive Bidding and Interference: WJO

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Level: 1

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General

When an opponent opens the bidding with 1-suit or even 1NT, then we have ways to show good hands with long suits: overcall, double and bid, Western Cuebid, etc. With all those options for showing a good hand, we can use a jump into a new suit as a weak bid, showing a long suit with minimum values (a preemptive-type hand). This continues our approach to bidding that good hands go slow and that jumps in competition are generally weak.

Jump Overcalls by Level

A Weak Jump Overcall shows about 5-10 HCP and a long, usually decent, suit. The exact requirements for a WJO vary somewhat based upon vulnerability and position, similar to a preemptive opening bid.

Examples of WJO

(1♣) 2♥

A jump to the 2-level usually shows a hand similar to a weak-two opening bid, a 6+c suit and 5-10 points.

(1♣) 3♥

A jump to the 3-level usually shows something like a 3-level preemptive opening.

(1♣) 4♥

A jump to the 4-level usually shows something like a 4-level preemptive opening.

Note: In general, jumps all the way to game can be a bit more wide-ranging than other preemptive bids, like 4-12 points, because the Overcaller does not have to worry about missing a game. This is particularly true when partner of the Overcaller is a passed hand.



Advancing a Weak Jump Overcall

A simple and playable approach for Advancer's bids opposite partner's WJO is to bid just as if partner had made a preemptive opening bid. This allows the partnership to recycle their already well-discussed agreements. Specifically, this allows Advancer to use 2NT as either a Feature Ask or as Ogust, just as they would opposite a weak-two opening bid.

Example

1♣ 2♥ P 2NT Ogust or Feature

The one bid that is significantly different in a WJO auction is a cuebid of the opponent's suit.

Example

1♦ 2♥ P 3♦

This is a rare, somewhat illogical, auction. This bid must show a strong hand and be trying for some game. A reasonable treatment is to play this as a Western Cuebid, asking for a stopper in the opponent's suit to play 3NT. Discuss this with your regular partner before you make this bid at the table.

Conclusion

WJOs are similar to preemptive opening bids. We must be slightly more careful about using them, especially when vulnerable, because we know that at least one opponent has already shown a good hand. If we think the opponents may be on their way to an easy auction to game or slam, a WJO may be our last chance to make their lives difficult and eat up their bidding space. Attack the opponents' auctions with WJOs, especially when the vulnerability is favorable!