

*Etobicoke Bridge Centre*



# Competitive Bidding – Lessons



*(Last revised May 14/2020)*

Location: Etobicoke Olympium Lounge (2<sup>nd</sup> floor)

Starts: Monday June 3, 2013 1:00 – 3:15

Duration: 4 lessons; last class June 24

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Notes

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## Why Compete for the Contract?

- The hand may belong to your side
  - Half the HCPs and an 8-card fit typically makes a 2-level contract
- Use up bidding space; pre-emptive value
  - Even a 1 Spade bid over 1 Minor has preemptive value. Right hand opponent now cannot bid 1 Heart with less than 10 pts or with only 4 Hearts (Solution = Negative Doubles)
- Push your opponents higher, they may go down
- Suggest a good opening lead, and help partner defend
- May lead to a good sacrifice, be it of a game, or a part-score

## Review of Main Competitive Bidding Tools (Overcalls and Doubles)

(These review notes are slightly modified from the Beg 2 course)

### Overcalls

#### Simple Suit Overcall

With 8 or more points, bid a good 5+ card suit at the 1-level. The weaker your suit, the more points you should have

- Example, with S Kxx H AQJxx D xx C xxx bid 1 Heart
- With S Qxxxx H Jx D Kxx C Axx bid Pass

You should have more to overcall at the 2-level (12+)

- With S Axx H xx D Qxx C KQJxx bid 2 Clubs (just enough)
  - If it is a close decision if you have enough to overcall, bid if not vulnerable, pass if vulnerable

#### 1 NT Overcall

With a hand like a 1NT opener and definitely a stopper in opponent's suit, bid 1 NT

- Example, over a 1 Spade opening bid
  - With S KQx H AQx D Qxx C Kxxx bid 1 NoTrump
  - With S 10xx H Kxxx D AQxx C Axx bid \_\_\_\_\_

#### Jump Overcall

With a 6+ card good suit, and a weak hand otherwise, jump to the 2-level in the suit

- Example, with S KQJxxx H xx D Jxx C xx over a 1 C/D/H opening bid, overcall 2 Spades
  - Note this is an equivalent hand to an opening 2-bid preempt

- With a good 7 card suit, jump to 3-level (again, just like an opening preempt)
- With S Qxxxxx H Ax D Axx C xx bid \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_

### Takeout Double

At low levels, the frequency of an effective regular (penalty) double is very low, so instead a double is used for a totally different purpose; to show support for the unbid suits. A classic “takeout” double would have 1 or 0 cards in the opponent’s suit and 4+ cards in the other 3 suits. You should have 13+ **dummy** points. Dummy points are used because you implicitly have a fit for whichever suit your partner bids.

- Example, over the opponent’s 1 Club opening, with
  - S Axxx H AQxx D Jxxx C x bid Double (a minimum)
    - You have 11 HCP + 3 for singleton, hence 14 dummy pts
- Your shape can be less unbalanced but your HCP minimum thus goes up, so over opponents 1 Diamond opening, with
  - S AJx H KQxx D Jx C Qxxx bid Double
- When a major is bid in front of you, you should have 4 cards in the unbid major, so over opponents 1 Spade opening, with
  - S x H AJ10x D KQxxx C Jxx bid Double
- With a hand shaped like a 1NT overcall, but no stopper in the opponent’s suit, a double often works. Over opponent’s 1 Heart, with
  - S KJxx H Jx D AKxx C KQx bid Double
- If you have a hand that is too big for a regular overcall, double first, then bid your suit over partner’s (forced) bid. Partner will now know you did not have a normal double, but this big overcall hand (17+ pts, a v gd suit) with
  - S AKQJxx H Jx D AKxx C x bid Double, then Spades at the lowest available level

### Responding to a Takeout Double

The key issue here is that partner is asking/forcing you to bid, which you must do (unless right-hand opponent bids), REGARDLESS OF YOUR LACK OF HIGH CARDS! If you pass, it means the opponents will play in the opener’s suit, at a low level and doubled, absolutely NOT what your partner wants! You are being directed to bid your best (unbid) suit, so do so.

Assume the bidding has gone 1 Heart by opponent, Double by partner, Pass, ....

- With 0-8 points, make a suit bid at the lowest available level, so with
  - S Qxxx H xxx D xxxx C xx          bid 1 Spade
- With 9-11 points, jump in your suit, so with
  - S xx H xxx D AKxxx C Kxx          bid 3 Diamonds
- With 8+ pts, relatively balanced, and a stopper in the opponent's suit, bid NT
  - S Kxx H QJx D xxx C Axxx          8-10 pts, bid 1 NT
  - S Axx H Kxx D QJx C Qxx          11-12 pts, bid 2NT
  - S Qxx H KJx D Axxxx C Kx          13+, bid 3NT

Note: You may end up in 3NT with a bit less than 25 HCPs, because the hand is easier to play as the opener bidder will be marked with almost all the high cards

- With an unbalanced hand, 12+ pts, 4+ cards in other major, bid game
  - S KQxxx H xx D AQJx C xx          bid 4 Spades
- With a game forcing hand (12+pts) and needing more info (not sure what game to play), cuebid the opponent's suit.

Best use is when you have

a) two four card majors, partner may only have one, which is it?

- 1D X P 2D holding S AJTx H KQxx D xx C Kxx  
Partner will bid a 4-card major, which you will raise to game

b) Have one 4-card major and stopper in opponent's suit, do we have major fit? If not, let's play 3N.

- With a **MASSIVE** holding in the opponent's suit, you may pass, which converts partner's takeout double into a penalty double. You should have 3 or more sure tricks just in the opponent's suit. Partner is expected to lead a trump if he has one and you should pull declarer's trump (!! ) to keep her from making tricks via low ruffs
  - S Axx H KQJ10x D xxx C xx          bid Pass
- You will, on occasion, have to make an "ugly" decision

- S Axx H Jxxxx D xxx C xx Do NOT Pass, grit your teeth and bid 1 Spade
- If your right-hand opponent bids a suit or NT, you are off the “have to bid” hook, and can pass with a bad hand. However, with some values, compete by bidding.
  - S xxx H xx D Qxxxx C xxx bid Pass
  - S KJxx H xx D xxx C Axxx bid 2 Spades
- If right hand opponent Redoubles (showing 10+ pts and interest in defending), you still must bid your best suit, even with your likely 3-count. Remember partner has 3 suits, how will he know which one to bid??

### Responding to an Overcall

If partner has overcalled, he has a 5+ card suit. A 1-level overcall could be as few as 8 pts, 12+ for a 2-level overcall. Your first option as “advancer” is to raise partner’s suit, keeping these point counts in mind.

Assume opener has bid 1 Diamond, partner has overcalled 1 Spade, next player passed or bid

- Raise partner’s suit one level, with 6 to 10 dummy pts
  - S Jxx H xxx D Kxxxx C Ax bid 2 Spades
  - Even though your side may have only 14 HCPs, there is little downside to this bid. If the opponents have 26 HCPs, they can make a game, and you will get a good result if they put you down one or two, even doubled, in 2 Spades. The pre-emptive value of this single raise is also very good.
- Jump raise partner, with 11 to 12 dummy pts
  - S Kxxx H Qxxx D x C Axxx bid 3 Spades
  - Modern Player option: Almost all experienced players now play a jump-raise as a weak raise (4+ trump, 3-6 pts), and use a cue-bid as a limit raise. With the above hand, the bid would be 2 Diamonds
- Bid your own suit, if it is a great 5 card or good 6+ card suit. Implies no fit w partner and is **not forcing**. Suggests hand will play better in your suit than overcaller’s.
  - S xx H KQJxxx D xx C Kxx bid 2 Hearts
- If you have a big hand and wish your new suit to be forcing, jump a level of bidding
  - S xx H AKQ10x D Ax C Kxxx bid 3 Hearts

- Bid NT with opponents suit stopped:
  - S Kx H 10xxx D AJx C J10xx with 8 to 11 HCPs bid 1NT
  - S Jx H KQx D AJ10 D Qxxxx with 12 to 14 HCPs bid 2NT
  - With 15+ (rare), bid 3NT

## Responding to a Jump Overcall

Partner has bid 2 Spades over opponent's 1C opening bid

- Because partner has used up more bidding space, and is guaranteeing a very good, long suit, you are rarely going to bid a new suit. If you do, you must hold 0 or 1 of partner's suit and your suit must be very good
- Raises are furthering the pre-empt, they are not invitational to game. They are done with 2+ card trump support, but preferably 3 or more
  - Holding S Qxx H Kxx D Qxxxx C xx bid 3 Spades
- With a stopper in the opponent's suit and a 15+HCP balanced hand, bid 2 or 3NT
  - Holding S Qx H AJ10x D AQx C KQxx bid 3NT

## Responding to a 1NT Overcall

- Over partner's 1NT Overcall, play systems ON, meaning all of your normal responses, such as Stayman and Transfers, apply

## Advanced Takeout Doubles (from Single Lesson)

### Doubling after Opponent's Raise

- When responder makes a single or double raise of his partner's opening bid, a double is takeout for the 3 unbid suits
  - 1H – P – 2H – X with S KJxx H x D Axx C Kxxxx
- As the level goes up, your double needs more beef
  - 1D – P – 3D – X with S AQxx H KJxx D x C KQxx

### Two-suit Takeout Doubles; Assorted sequences

- When two suits have been bid by the opponents, a double guarantees 4-4 or better in the unbid two suits. As an unpassed hand, you should have an opening bid (counting dummy pts)

- 1D – P – 1H – X with S AQxx H xx D xxx C KQJx
- Note that having your high cards concentrated in the takeout suits makes for a better double. Do **not** double with S Jxxx H AJ D Kxx C Qxxx
- If you have already passed, you can lower the point count to 10-12 (dummy) pts.
  - P – 1C – P – 1S  
X with S Jx H KJxx D AJxx C xxx
  - Partner, knowing you don't have 13 pts, will not get overly excited with his 9 count (and can Pass or compete, knowing no game is being missed).
- Opponents may make more than two bids, your double can still be takeout, as long as two suits are still unbid. The following sequences are all takeout doubles for the two unbid suits
  - 1D – P – 1S – P  
2D – X
  - 1D – P – 1H – P  
2H – X
    - Note that the risk is slightly reduced in entering these auctions, as the opening bidder has indicated a minimum hand. However, you are forcing partner to bid at the 3-level if they don't have 4+ of your major, and you should have distribution to support that. Consider the above double with  
S KQ10x H xx D xx C AJxxx
    - Also note that when the opponents have a fit (hearts here), there is more chance that your side also has a fit

### **Additional Competitive Bids (Note from Conventions course)**

#### **Michaels Cue Bid**

If the opponents open in a minor suit, cue bidding their suit shows 5-5 in the majors. Right-hand opponent opens 1 Diamond and you hold

S KQJxx H QJ9xx D x C xx Bid 2 Diamonds

If the opponents open in a major suit, cue bidding their suit shows 5 cards in the unbid major and 5 cards in one of the two minor suits.

- Right-hand opponent opens 1 Heart and you hold

S AQ10xx H x D KQ10xx C xx      Bid 2 Hearts

Modern Players: most now play a “mini-maxi” style, which means you bid Michaels with either a weaker hand (6-10) or a strong hand (16+). If you have 11-15 pts, bid the higher suit, hoping to bid the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit later. This helps partner decide how to respond.

### Responding to a Michaels Cue-Bid

- You often will bid the suit you prefer at the next available level.
  - Over 1D <sup>2D</sup> Pass; holding S Qxxx H xx D Kxxx C xxx  
Bid 2 Spades
  - Note even with a very bad hand, you must pick a suit, you cannot pass
- If you have strong trump support for one of partner’s suits and a good hand, you might jump the bidding.

Holding S Qxxx H Kxx D xx C AJxx ..., you have a known 9-card spade fit and ..

- A high honour in hearts that will really enhance partner’s heart suit
  - Aces (vs lower honours) opposite partner’s short suits are great working cards.
  - Conclusion: With such great fitting cards, bid directly to game in Spades. You will have the shorter trump holding, so count your hand as a dummy, worth 10HCP + 1 for doubleton = 11 count plus extras as described above.
- If partner has bid Michaels over a major, your first priority is to bid the unbid major. However, if you are better off playing in partner’s minor, bid 2NT to tell partner to bid his minor suit
    - Over 1H <sup>2H</sup> Pass; holding S x H Jxxx D K10xxx C QJx  
Bid 2NT
      - You do not wish to play in Spades, so 2NT tells partner to bid his 5-card minor
  - The other bid you should know is when you do not fit either of partner’s suits but do have a **very** good suit of your own. Bid the suit to play, despite partner’s advertised holdings



- Over 1S <sup>2S</sup> Pass; holding S Qxx H xx D KQJ10xx C xx Bid 3D (to play)

- Other

- If, after partner bids Michaels, the next player bids, you are no longer in a demand-bid situation, but may choose to bid with a fit and some values
- Michael's is ON in balancing position
  - 1S <sup>Pass</sup> Pass  
<sup>2S</sup> would be Michaels
- With a big 2-suiter, bid Michaels, get partner's preference then jump to game or explore for a slam
  - Holding S AKQxxx H KQJ10x D A C x
    - Over partner's expected 2H/2S bid, check for Aces and bid accordingly

### The Unusual 2 NoTrump

Another common 2-suiter conventional bid is called the Unusual 2 NoTrump. This is a jump overcall of the opponent's opening 1-bid and shows 5-5 in the lower two unbid suits.

For example, right-hand opponent opens 1 Heart and you hold

S xx H x D QJ10xx C AJ10xx bid 2NT

Hence over a major opening, it shows minors. Over a minor opening, it shows the other minor and hearts. It is similar to a Michael's cuebid in many ways, beyond the actual suits held. One difference is that the two suits held are always clear, whereas Michaels may involve an unspecified minor as the 2<sup>nd</sup> suit. Partner is therefore expected to pick one of the 2NT bidder's suits. As with Michaels, bidding the 4<sup>th</sup> suit (partner has two, opponent has one) shows a very good suit, indicating this suit would make the best trump suit, even if partner only has a singleton.

What would you respond with these hands, over a 1 Diamond opening and partner's 2NT ?

1. S AQxxx H xxx D xx C xxx Bid \_\_\_\_\_
2. S KJxx H xxx D xx C QJx Bid \_\_\_\_\_
3. S Axx H Kxxx D x C KJxxx Bid \_\_\_\_\_

4. S AQJ10xx H xx D xxx C xx Bid \_\_\_\_\_
5. S KJx H Kx D AQJx C Kxxx Bid \_\_\_\_\_

## Balancing doubles

Balancing bids are any bids where a Pass by you would end the bidding. The opponents have decided to stop bidding at a low level, and you should consider making a bid, with as little as 7 HCPs. In general, you can make balancing bids with slightly less values (about a King) than direct seat bids, since partner is likely to have a decent hand and you don't wish to sell out for a one-level contract.

Why balance?....

- Partner may have a good hand but not be able to get into the auction. Consider what partner can bid over 1H on his right, holding ....  
S Axx H xxx D KQJ C KJxx. She cannot overcall without a five-card suit, not a takeout double shape, not enough points, nor a heart stopper for 1NT; hence must PASS
- The hand may belong to your side, ie you can make the highest contract
- You may push the opponents to bid higher, and they may go down
- 1D – P – P – X can be made on as little as

S KQx H xxxxx D xx C Qxxx

Partner of the balancing doubler must allow that the double may be a little lighter than normal. In general, when responding to partner's balancing bid, subtract a King (3 pts) from your hand before deciding on the best bid.

## Re-opening double

A takeout double by the opener himself

- 1C – 1S – P – P  
X would show extra values, spade shortness, and support for all unbid suits,  
such as S x H KQxx D AQx C KJxxx

## Doubles (Low-level) that are for penalty

Notice, these are not exceptions to low-level takeouts, as partner has made the opening bid, not the opponents

1Y – 1NT – X      {Y represents any suit}

- Holding 8+ pts, your side has 21 minimum, and the 1NT bidder will almost certainly go down, playing with at most 4 pts in dummy

When the 1NT bidder is at unfavourable vulnerability, meaning he is vulnerable, you are not, this is an even better double, as you only need to beat it two to surpass any game your side might have. In this situation always double, whereas if you are vulnerable, 1NTer not, you must consider bidding on (to 3NT for example), instead of doubling

1NT – 2Y – X

- Here, you know partner has a balanced 15-17, very useful for defense. With any trump stack, double (less of a stack reqd if opponents at unfavourable VUL). For example, if opponent bids 2D over partner's 1NT opening, X with

S Kxx H xxx D Q10xx C Axx

## Bidding over Opponents Opening other than 1 of a Suit

### Over 1NT Opening

If the Opponents Open 1NT, they are marked with 15-17 HCPs, and you need to have slightly more values to enter the bidding. Note that your other opponent knows partner has a good hand for defense, and double is for penalties, so getting doubled becomes much more likely than when opponents are bidding and raising suits (ie, 1S – 2S). Let's look at what bids mean in the direct seat over a 1NT opening, that is, right-hand opponent opens 1NT. Note you sit behind the 1NT opening, a good thing, for the most part.

- A Double shows equivalent hand or better, hence 15+ pts, and a good opening lead
  - With S AQ10 H Kxx D KQJx C Qxx      Bid Double
- Suits are Natural and should be of very good quality. Have 6 trumps or an excellent five card suit
  - With S xx H KQJxxx D Axx C Qx      Bid 2 Hearts
- Jump in a suit is pre-emptive but must be disciplined, very good suit
  - With S AQJ10xxx H x D Jxx C xx      Bid 3 Spades
  - Note if you have a running suit, may be best to defend 1NT
    - Holding S xx H AKQJxxx D xx C xxx      Take your 7 tricks for down one (at least), good chance you will not have a game, take your plus score

- FYI, experienced players use artificial systems over 1NT, generally showing both one and two-suited hands

## Over Opponent's Preemptive Bid

- When the opponents make a pre-emptive bid as the opening call, and you were intending to bid, you have lost bidding space, and are forced to start your side's bidding at a high level. In general, you need more for your standard calls such as overcalls and doubles.
- Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with a 3 Diamond call
  - An overcall shows a very good suit and at least opening points
    - Holding S KQ10xxx H Jx D Ax C KQx bid 3 Spades
  - A double is simply a "beefier" version of a standard one; with a minimum of about 15 dummy points
    - Holding S AJxx H KQxx D x C AQxx bid Double
  - For some hands, you will have to assume partner has an average number of the remaining points and bid what you think you can make. This might mean jumping to a game, with a great suit, by giving partner half of the remaining points. If you have 18 points and pre-empter about 8, that leaves 14 for the remaining two players. Give partner 7 of them, and bid what you think you can make
    - Holding S KQJ10xx H Axx D x C KQx bid 4 Spades
    - Holding S KJ10 H AQx D KQx C A10xx bid 3NT
  - Sometimes, to maintain discipline and partnership confidence, you need to Pass with a hand you would have overcalled at the 1-level
    - Holding S KJxxx H Axx D Qxx C Kxx bid Pass
- Over a Weak Two preempt, you have a little more space. The above principles apply and .. (left-hand opponent opens 2 Hearts)
  - Bid 2NT with a typical 1NT overcall hand
  - Jump to 3NT with a strong hand and a long running minor suit
    - Holding S Ax H KJx D AKQxxx C Kx
  - Jump in a suit with a big overcall; forcing
    - Holding S AKQxxx H x D Axx C KQx bid 3 Spades
    - Remember a general rule: don't pre-empt over opponent's pre-empt, hence such jump bids are strong

## Handling opponents interference when your side opened the bidding

You also need to know how to bid when your partner makes the opening bid, and your right-hand opponent comes in with a suit or a double.

## Bidding over an opponent's overcall

- Assume partner bid 1 Diamond, and next hand bid 1 Spade
  - With 10+ pts and a 5+ card suit, bid 2 Hearts
  - With 10+ pts and a 4+ card minor, bid 2 Minor (new suit)
  - With trump support (4 Ds, 5 clubs over 1 Club), 6-9 dummy pts, raise
  - With trump support, 10-11 dummy pts, double-raise
    - See end of notes for more advanced method of cue bid raise
  - With 8-10 pts and a balanced hand, with a stopper, bid 1NT
  - With 11-13, bid 2NT, with 14+ bid 3NT
  - What is left to resolve is what is done with 4 Hearts (unbid major), and especially with <10 pts.
    - Consider a hand like S xx H AJxx D xxx C Axxx.
    - You cannot bid 1NT w/o a Spade stopper, cannot raise partner with only 3 diamonds, cannot bid 2 Clubs w less than 10 pts. The answer is to use a double as a “negative” double, not a penalty double.
    - A negative double promises 4 (or more) cards in the unbid major.
    - As a starting point, play negative doubles through 3 Spades, meaning if the overcall is above 3 Spades, a double remains a traditional penalty double.
    - Points required are 6+ at the 1-level, 8+ at the 2-level, 10+ at the 3-level
    - Note that 1C <sup>1H</sup> 1S shows 5+ Spades, since a double shows 4
    - A negative double also can be used to show a long suit, but less than 10 pts. Holding S xx H KQJxxx D xxx C Jx, with a spade overcall of partner's 1 Minor, double (negative), then next time around, bid 2 Hearts (typically to play there)

## Bidding over a 1NT Overcall

- As previously mentioned, double is for penalties
- Since you would double with any decent hand, bidding a suit shows a weak hand but a good suit, and is usually to play there
  - Holding S xx H QJ10xxx D Qxx C xx compete with 2 Hearts

## Bidding over a Double

- Redouble with 10+ points, and an interest in defending for a penalty
- All raises are weak, so 1H – X – 3H is not a limit raise
- With a limit raise or better, redouble first, then raise on your next turn
  - Modern Bidding: 2NT is conventional, used to show a limit raise or better

The “Do nothing” rule, be keen on green

- One of the best bids in the box is a Pass. In a competitive auction, and it is your turn to compete or not, Pass if your hand has nothing extra to show. This is a descriptive bid, especially when partner still has a bid. Consider this hand

S AQxxx H xx D Axx C Kxx

You Opp Ptnr Opp

1S 2C 2S 3C

P P ? ?

Indicate to your partner that your 1 Spade bid fully describes your hand, ie, that you are a minimum for your bid, by PASSing. Partner still can compete with 3S or Pass, as she sees fit.

## WHAT A GAME!!

Email with any questions, Please

## Cue-Bid raise

A universally adopted treatment by intermediate/open players is, when opponents bid a suit, to use a cue bid to show a good raise of partner's suit. When raising a major, this bid shows 3+ trump support and a good 10 – 12 dummy points (or better). It can be called a 3 trump limit raise+

1H (1S) 2S = cue-bid raise; You might have S xx H Q9x D Axxx C KJxx

The advantage of using this bid is that it frees up the normal sequence of jumping in partner's suit to show this limit raise. Modern bidders love to preempt, as such bids make it much harder for opponents to bid. So, once you agree to play cue-bid raises, a jump raise becomes a preemptive raise. This shows a weak hand (2-6 HC Pts) and 4 trump support.

1H (1S) 3H = pre-emptive raise; You might have S x H JTxx D Qxxxx C xxx. Note that this bid fits under the law of total tricks, which says it is often correct to bid to the number of trumps your side has. Here with partner having 5+ hearts, you have 4 so bid to 9 or 3-level.

Once you cue-bid raise, partner should

- a) sign off below game with a minimum hand
- b) bid game with extra values (good 14 playing pts or more).

This fits with regular limit raise bidding over 1H P 3H exc. Partner may only have 3 hts, so hand may be a little weaker

Bidding has gone 1H (2D) 3D P  
?

You have a) S Ax H KQ9xx D xxx C QJx Bid 3H with a minimum opening

You have b) S xx H AQJTx D KQx C Kx Bid 4H with extra values

You may also use this cue-bid raise with better than an 11ish pt hand, since the bid is forcing.

Over 1S (2H) 3H P

3S P 4S = you have values for game, not just an invitational hand. Since you cannot jump immediately to 4S (weak freak), this is how you bid such a hand.