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This Week in Bridge

(368) Responder's Rebids After LHO's Overcall

@AiB

Level: 2 of 6 (5 of 10)

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General

A common auction is to hear partner open at the 1-level, we respond with 1-Major, and then LHO makes a simple overcall. We need to make sure that in this auction we have good agreements with partner about what our bids mean in the second round of the bidding. These auctions can vary based on what partner does with their rebid – rebid NT, a suit, make a support double, or even pass. Let's take a look at these auctions and see how we further describe our hand as Responder in each of these situations.

Opener Makes a Rebid

When Opener makes a rebid (NT, the same suit they opened, or a new suit) then we generally continue the auction as we would as if there was no interference. One difference in this competitive auction vs. when LHO does not bid is that we know partner does not have 3-card support for our suit (since they did not make a support double). That means that we often do not need to make use of something like New Minor Forcing or 4th Suit Forcing to find a 5-3 fit. We also have a cuebid of the opponent's suit available to create a forcing auction if we need to.

Example 1

♠ 93

♥ AK54

♦ KQT963

♣ 8

1♦ P 1♥ 1♠

2♣ P —

Here we need to make a forcing bid. 2♠ is a clear game forcing bid and forces Opener to further describe their hand and potentially show their ♠ stopper.

1♦ P 1♥ 1♠

2♣ P 2♠ P

2NT P 3♦ ...

Here we show our game forcing values and then later show our ♦ fit. The auction can proceed towards 3NT or 5♦ or even 6♦!



Opener Makes a Support Double

If Opener makes a support double then Responder is forced to make rebid. We covered this entire topic in *TWIB 364*: take a look there for agreements in this situation.

Opener Passes

If Opener chooses to pass after the opponent's overcall then we can generally assume they have one of two hand types – a balanced hand with 2 cards in our suit that could not bid notrump (either no stopper or no cheap notrump bid available) OR a hand that trap passed, hoping to defend what the opponents bid. When the opponent's overcall is at the 1-level a trap pass is rare, so a pass by partner generally shows a balanced 12-14 point hand with no stopper in the opponent's suit.

Example 2

1♣ P 1♥ 1♠

P

♠ 9743

♥ A9

♦ Q93

♣ AQJ8

This is the type of hand Opener usually has for passing LHO's overcall.

When the opponent overcalls at the 2-level, then it is more likely that the Opener has a trap pass. That means that Responder has less room to "operate" and must leave open the possibility of penalizing the opponents. Let's look at an example auction in detail.

Example 3

1♦ P 1♠ 2♥

P P ___?

Here are Responder's options:

- 2♠ Very good 5-card or 6+card ♠ suit, 6-9 points.
- 2NT Natural, invitational, ♥ stopper
- 3♣ 5+card ♣, non-forcing, competitive (less than invitational values)
- 3♦ 4+card ♦, non-forcing, competitive, 7-10 points
- 3♥ Game Forcing Cuebid. Strong Hand, usually very distributional
- 3♠ 6+card ♠, non-forcing, invitational, 10-11 points
- 3NT To Play
- Pass Usually fewer than 8 HCP
- Double Usually about 8+ HCP and not a highly distributional hand



Here is an example of the type of hand we would reopen with a double:

Example 4

♠ A9643

♥ 94

♦ K8

♣ K943

1♦ P 1♠ 2♥

P P X

We reopen with a double (takeout) in hopes that partner has a hand like

♠ 5

♥ AJT4

♦ AJ74

♣ A876

If this is the case, we are going to destroy the opponent's 2♥ contract.

Conclusion

When we respond, our LHO overcalls, and we get a chance to make a second bid then we must describe our hand and communicate with partner. We need to make sure that partner is on the same page with us about what bids are non-forcing (6-9 points), what bids are invitational, and what bids are stronger. It is also important for us to be on the same page with partner about which bids are forcing and which are non-forcing. Make sure that you discuss these auctions and follow some general agreements that help you and partner handle them.