

ADVANCING AFTER A SUIT OVERCALL

By

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PREFACE

I teach overcalls and advances in two 3-hour lessons. The first lesson focuses primarily on simple suit overcalls at the one level and two level and the one notrump overcall, but includes an introduction to advances. The second lesson focuses on advances after specific overcalls but includes rebids by the overcaller as well as responses to the opening bid after an overcall. Jump overcalls are covered in a subsequent lesson on preemptive bids.

In this article I will cover most of the material from my second lesson on overcalls and advances. In the interest of brevity I will omit the following topics:

- ADVANCING AFTER A 1NT OVERCALL
- OVERCALLER'S REBIDS
- RESPONDER'S BIDS AFTER AN OVERCALL
- SUMMARY
- EXERCISES

In the interest of completeness I will include the background material on advances from the first lesson.

In this preface I will attempt to provide the background material which the students already have regarding my approach and notation.

For ease of writing I arbitrarily assign opener and intervener the masculine gender while responder and advancer are given the feminine gender. This allows me to use "he" and "she" frequently to identify a particular partner in an auction.

I utilize a somewhat different approach from the norm in all of my lessons. In general, rather than having students memorize point count and suit length requirements for their bids I ask them to focus on two questions:

- Do we have a Golden Fit in a Major Suit? (GFMS?)
This is sometimes supplemented with "Do we have a Golden Fit in a minor suit?" (GFms?) or even generalized to "Do we have a Golden Fit?" (GF?)
- Do we want to be in a Game contract? (G?)

The answers to these two questions may seem to be very trite but are actually quite powerful: Yes (Y), No (N) or Maybe (M). Often the Maybe choice is broken into three ranges – Maybe^{Weak} (M^W), Maybe^{Intermediate} (M^I) and Maybe^{Strong} (M^S). I have found this approach to be very effective in terms of getting students to **think** bridge instead of **memorize** bridge.

Certainly there is some memorization required for the points required to open the bidding and to overcall as well as suit length requirements for opening in major/minor suits, responding in new suits, overcalling and advancing, but when it comes to raises of opening bids or overcalls and rebids the focus is on these two questions.

INTRODUCTION TO ADVANCING AFTER AN OVERCALL

(This material in this section is from the first lesson)

In some respects the advancer and advances are similar to responder and responses. But to distinguish between the different players and their bids it is convenient to give them different names. As you will see shortly it is also helpful because identical types of bids by these players have different meanings and the requirements for making these bids are different for the two positions.

When you are the advancer you can make the same types of calls as responder:

- Pass
- Raise your partner's suit
- Bid a new suit of your own
- Bid notrump

But there is one other bid you can make that is not available to responder in an uncontested auction. You can bid a suit an opponent has bid. Such a bid is called a *cuebid*.

*A **cuebid** is simply a bid of a suit that was initially bid by an opponent.*

As you might guess you seldom want to play in a suit the opponents have already mentioned. So the cuebid can be used almost as a convention – although technically it is not treated as such. The availability of the cuebid will be found very helpful but perhaps somewhat confusing until you get used to it.

As we move further into the area of advances get ready to put aside almost everything you learned regarding responder's calls and enter a new arena of this bridge puzzle we are trying to solve. Before proceeding further with advancer's natural bids let's discuss the cuebid in more detail.

The Cuebid

Cuebids actually come in 2 flavors:

- A simple cuebid – the bid of an opponent's suit as cheaply as possible
- A jump cuebid – the bid of an opponent's suit 1 level higher than a simple cuebid

For simplicity we refer to a simple cuebid simply as a cuebid.

The meaning of a cuebid has evolved significantly over time and today depends upon the scenario in which it is made, i.e., what happened before the cuebid. These scenarios can be broken into two general categories.

- A cuebid made when your partner has not yet had anything to say in the auction other than perhaps to have passed
- A cuebid made after your partner has bid or doubled

In the first case a cuebid can have various meanings depending upon partnership agreement – anything from natural (particularly if a minor) to showing a very strong hand or some type of distributional hand. These bids are generally considered to be conventional and are beyond the scope of this course.

Meaning of a Cuebid

Depends on scenario:

- *Before partner has bid or doubled*
Avoid these until you learn about them
- *After partner has bid or doubled*

Generally speaking when a cuebid is made after your partner has bid, it is completely artificial – it says absolutely nothing about the cards you hold in that suit – but shows a relatively strong hand and asks for more information from your partner. It is forcing for one round. There are many applications of the cuebid by opener, overcaller, responder and advancer. Without going into details just remember that:

In a competitive auction the cuebid is your good friend.

There will be many times when you are in a competitive auction where you really want to make a forcing bid but do not have a natural call available. When this happens seriously consider calling on your friend for help by making a cuebid – even if you don't have a specific agreement with your partner regarding its meaning. Just make sure your partner knows you want him to bid something. Without prior discussion appropriate for your situation at the time, you can have the following general understanding for the cuebid:

Partner, I have extra values in the current context, but I don't have a natural forcing bid available to show them. Please bid something that makes sense in light of the auction and your hand.

After partner's overcall a cuebid (simple or jump) is the only forcing bid by advancer.

This statement is not quite absolute. There are some other bids associated with slam bidding that are also forcing but they are outside of the scope of the current topic.

A simple cuebid always shows a hand strength comparable to that of a limit raise (if partner had opened instead of overcalled) or stronger. It may show at least 3-card trump support for partner but can be made with some other holding.

Overcaller's Rebid after Advancer Made a Simple Cuebid

It may seem that we are getting a little ahead of ourselves by discussing overcaller's rebid after a cuebid before presenting all of advancer's bids. But knowing what partner is expected to do after advancer made a cuebid will be helpful when discussing all of the options available to advancer.

As the overcaller what are you supposed to do after partner makes a cuebid? First of all you do the same thing you always do after partner has made a call other than pass – revalue the strength of your hand in terms of your answer to G? assuming that the strength of advancer's hand is the minimum that it might be for her call – in this case that of a limit raise. Then take one of the following actions realizing that she may not have trump support for you:

- If G? = N rebid your suit at the cheapest available level
- If G? = M or Y make some other descriptive bid below game. Any bid you make, other than the cheapest bid in your suit, is forcing for one round – so do something else cheaply to describe your hand.
 - Bid a new suit of at least 4 cards if you have one – this might lead to the discovery of a 4-4 Major Suit fit
 - Bid a new suit of 3 cards if you have a concentration of your HCP there
 - Make a jump bid in your first suit with a good 6-card suit
 - Bid notrump with a balanced hand (5332) and a stopper in the opponents' suit
 - Make a further cuebid with a balanced hand and no stopper in the opponents' suit or an unbalanced hand with a mediocre 6-card suit of your own

Let's look at a few examples for the following auction:

OPENER	YOU	RESPONDER	ADVANCER
1♦	1♥	Pass	2♦
Pass	?		

- ♠ KJ76 If advancer has only a limit raise, G? = N. Show your lack of game interest by bidding
- ♥ KQT76 2♥. Note that while rebidding a suit without support from partner generally shows
- ♦ 43 more length than promised with your first bid, this scenario is an exception to that rule.
- ♣ 76 Change the ♠7 to the ♠A and you would rebid 2♠. Instead change the ♠7 to the ♥A
- and your rebid would be 3♥.

- ♠ QJ6 Bid 2NT to show extra values with a balanced hand and a diamond stopper.
- ♥ KQJ76
- ♦ KQ6 But if your minor suits were reversed, you would make your own cuebid of 3♦ to show
- ♣ 76 extra values with no clear direction.

♠ AQ6 Another case for a 3♦ cuebid of your own.
♥ KJ7652
♦ 6
♣ KT6

♠ AKJ Bid 2♠. Those 3 excellent spades might be better than 4 small ones.
♥ KQT76
♦ 43
♣ 976

Advancer's General Approach

Most often in a competitive auction both sides are battling for a partscore contract although sometimes one side or the other, or even both, might still have a game contract in mind.

Despite many differences between responder's bids and advancer's bids, there is one very significant commonality in the approaches of the two players. Just as if she were responder,

After partner's overcall advancer:

- *First answers GFMS? and GFms?*
- *Then revalues her hand*
- *Finally answers G?*

The strength range of overcaller's hand depends on whether the overcall was at the 1 or 2 level and is always different from that of an opening bidder (never more than 17 points if in a suit). Although advancer's point ranges for the G? decisions will be different from responder's, the same concept is used. In this respect advancer is no different from responder. So everything we have discussed earlier in this regard is still valid from a conceptual viewpoint – even though the details to be presented later in this lesson are different.

One major difference between responder's objective and advancer's objective is the search for a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. Remember that when partner overcalled he showed a decent suit of 5+ cards (often 6 if at the 2 level) and is strongly suggesting that suit is the strain in which he would like to play. Thus there is no reason for you to introduce a new suit unless it is also a 5-card or longer suit. In fact the most common message you will send when you bid a new suit is that you do not like partner's suit and you have your own suit which would have satisfied the requirements for an overcall if you had been in partner's position. Of course since partner has already bid, you do not need as much strength. You would usually bid a new suit only if partner had bid a minor and you had a Major – hoping to improve the contract. When you do this you should either have tolerance for partner's minor (in case he cannot tolerate your suit and must rebid his) or enough length and strength in your suit to rebid it if partner rebids his suit.

Another important issue in competitive bidding is that of estimating which side “owns” the deal. If your opponents are likely to have more strength than your side, the deal probably belongs to them. They will be able to bid and make a higher contract than you can. If your side is likely to have most of the strength, the deal probably belongs to your side. When the deal belongs to the opponents, you would like to do everything you can to disrupt their communication during the auction. In other words your bidding should be defensive oriented. If the deal belongs to your side you would like to further explore your game prospects, i.e., your bidding should be offensive oriented. How do you decide the owner of the deal? Mostly by your decision regarding G?. If your decision is N, the deal probably belongs to the opponents. If your decision is M^l or stronger, the deal probably belongs to your side. If your decision is M^w, you really don’t have a good feel for the ownership.

The Law of Total Tricks

Note: For simplicity I will summarize this section with the following:

From an offensive viewpoint you should bid up to the level equal to the number of trumps held by your side.

From a defensive viewpoint don’t let the opponents play at a level equal to the number of trumps held by their side.

Advancer’s Bidding Messages after an Overcall in a Suit

How is the overcaller supposed to know if you are bidding from a defensive or offensive viewpoint?
From the following rules:

1. A simple raise is primarily competitive – a weak game interest at best with usually only 3-card support
2. A jump raise below game is preemptive – no interest in game with 4-card support
3. A jump raise to game may be preemptive or offensive (intending to make) – definitely no interest in slam
4. The simple bid of a new suit is an attempt to improve the contract – no game interest and not forcing
5. A jump bid in a new suit below game is a strong invitation to game – usually in a Major and always shows your own good suit of 5⁺ cards
6. A jump to game in a new suit may be preemptive or offensive (intending to make) – definitely no interest in slam
7. Notrump bids below game are invitations to game – promise at least one stopper in the suit the opponents bid and deny support for overcaller’s suit if it was a Major, may have tolerance for overcaller’s suit if it was a minor; when considering these bids, count only HCP for your G? decision

8. 3NT is based on strength with the intention of making the contract – same hand types as for bids of 1NT or 2NT – count only HCP for your G? decision
9. A simple cuebid is forcing for one round – made when you are reasonably sure the deal belongs to your side (your strength is the equivalent of a limit raise or better) but you have no clear direction and need more information from partner
10. A jump cuebid is a “mixed raise” – shows at least 4-card trump support for partner with G? = M^W

While this list may appear rather lengthy and complex, it is really quite simple if you make a few observations:

- A cuebid (simple or jump) is the only forcing bid
- A jump bid in a new suit, notrump bids below game and a jump cuebid are the only explicit invitational bids
- Jumps to game are sign-off bids
- All other bids are simply competitive or preemptive

A couple of other observations are appropriate to emphasize some differences between responder’s bids and advancer’s bids:

- While responder never makes a jump shift, advancer may do so to show her own good suit with a game-invitational hand (*Note: Since in today’s bridge a jump shift by responder may be weak, strong or conventional I simply teach my beginners not to make that bid until they have enough experience to decide how they would like to use it.*)
- While responder’s jump raise to game is a preemptive bid, advancer’s jump raise to game may be either preemptive or a show of game values
- While the bid of a new suit by responder is forcing, the bid of a new suit by advancer is not

ADVANCING AFTER A 1-LEVEL SUIT OVERCALL

Having gotten some new general ideas for advancer out of the way, let’s get more specific and see what you do as advancer after partner has made a 1-level overcall in a suit. As mentioned in the previous chapter your first steps are exactly the same as responder’s! First determine answers to GFMS? and GFms?, then revalue your hand and finally answer G?. Use the same logical steps as if you were responder. In essence everything has changed but nothing has changed!

Advancer Answers GFMS? and GFms?

In some respects answering these questions is easier when you are the advancer than they are when you are responder. Remember that partner has promised at least 5 cards in his suit, so if you have at least 3-card support you know GF? = Y in that suit. Most of the time it will be a Major Suit because we are considering only 1-level overcalls. The only exception being his 1♦ overcall of an opening 1♣ bid.

If you do have at least 3-card support for partner’s Major Suit overcall, then you know GFMS? = Y and the strain will be set – the only issue being the level.

If you do not have 3-card support for partner or even if you do and his suit was diamonds, assume GFMS? = N unless you have at least a 5-card Major of your own and then GFMS? = M. Yes, it is true that if you have a 4-card Major there will be a Golden Fit there if partner also has 4 cards – but that is unlikely.

Advancer Revalues Her Hand

If GFMS? = Y advancer should revalue her hand as dummy. Even if GFMS? = N but GFms? = Y and a notrump contract can be ruled out advancer should also revalue her hand as dummy. Revaluation is not necessary only if advancer does not have a GF with partner's suit or if partner is considering a notrump bid or a bid in her own suit.

Advancer Answers G?

First and foremost you must remember that partner has not opened the bidding. He has overcalled in a suit at the 1 level. Therefore his strength range is not 13 - 21 but 10 - 17. It is absolutely imperative that you remember this or you may very well get the wrong answer to G? Once you get partner's point range in mind, it is a simple matter to conclude that G? = Y if you have 15+ points and G? = N if you have 7 or fewer points. That leaves G? = M if you have 8 - 14 points and we break this down into 3 subdivisions as shown in the following complete list:

POINTS	G?
15 ⁺	Y
13 - 14	M ^S
10 - 12	M ^I
8 - 9	M ^W
0 - 7	N

Note that as responder the M range is a 6-point interval (6 - 11) while as advancer it is a 7-point interval (8 - 14). Therefore we need a 3-point range for one of the subdivisions and choose the middle one.

You need not memorize this list. You can easily work it out following the logic presented here. In fact working through the logic will help to keep you focused on the big picture.

Advancer's Call when G? = N

Most of the time you will pass if you have decided G? = N, but there are exceptions.

- ♠ Q43 If partner has overcalled in either Major, raise his bid to the 2 level – the same action you would take if he had opened and you were responder. You will be satisfying the
- ♥ K75 Law and helping partner to make an informed decision if opener bids again. The bid
- ♦ 86432 also has some preemptive value – taking away one bidding level from opener. You
- ♣ 63 should have 6 or 7 points to make this raise when G? = N.

- ♠ J864 Here you want to jump to the 3 level (preemptive) if partner overcalls in either Major.
- ♥ K975 Make life difficult for opener. In general you should have at least 4-card support with a
- ♦ 8 singleton or void when you make this call.
- ♣ 6532

The above two examples apply whether responder bid or passed.

Suppose an auction started

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♥	1♠	?

- ♠ 6 You have only 6 points, so G? = N. You are almost positive the opponents have a Golden
- ♥ T975 Fit in spades. You know you and your partner have at least a 9-card fit in hearts. Jump
- ♦ QJ43 to 3♥ and watch opener squirm, especially if they are vulnerable and you are not. Isn't
- ♣ T863 this a fun game?

Change a club to a heart in this hand and a jump to 4♥ would not be unreasonable (follow the Law) under favorable vulnerability. Your hand would have significant offensive potential and very little defensive value. Normally we do not like quacks but in this auction your partner is likely to hold a little diamond strength on the side.

Very seldom do you want to introduce your own suit when G? = N. But consider the following auction:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♦	X	?

- ♠ QJT853 Your spades are likely to be of little value to partner in a contract of 1♦^x, whereas
- ♥ 975 partner's high cards should be helpful to you in a 1♠ contract. Take the corrective
- ♦ 5 action of bidding 1♠. Remember that your 1♠ bid is not forcing or even invitational but
- ♣ T63 corrective, so partner is not expected to take further action.

This auction is a little touchy because it depends on the meaning of responder's double. Right now, you know only about penalty doubles. But sometimes a double is used for another purpose. In this sequence the double could be something called a negative double (see Chapter 21 – Negative Doubles – Part 1), essentially asking opener to bid a Major Suit if he has one. But even if that is the opponents' agreement, you are still afraid opener might pass and convert the negative double into a penalty double. So take the same corrective action.

Advancer's Call when G? = M^w

When your hand is this weak you would like to bid something, but your options are limited. In order of priority:

1. Jump to game in partner's Major Suit with 5-card support, especially if short in the other Major. You should have a singleton or void to make this bid.

2. Make a jump cuebid with 4-card support of partner's 1M overcall
This bid is called a mixed raise – your hand is too good for a preemptive raise but not good enough for a simple cuebid. With 4-card support the Law says you should be competing to the 3 level and the jump cuebid will force partner to that level while also telling him you might have game if he has near the maximum for his overcall.
3. Raise partner's Major Suit to the 2 level with 3-card support
By all means raise partner's Major Suit to the 2 level if you have a Golden Fit.
4. Bid a decent 5-card or longer Major of your own at the 1 level
Your requirements for this bid depend on whether you are bidding either Major over partner's 1♦ overcall or if you are bidding 1♠ over partner's 1♥ overcall.

In the first case you are trying to improve the contract and should either have support for partner's diamonds if he really does not like your Major or your suit should be long enough and strong enough to rebid at the 2 level if partner rebids his diamonds. He should know that he can safely retreat to 2♦. If he does have support he can consider a raise with extra values because you could also make the same bid if you decided $G? = M^!$. Even without extra values, he should raise according to the Law if opener or responder bids again.

In the second case you are already in a Major Suit and have no need to improve the contract from a scoring viewpoint. You should have a very good suit without support for partner's hearts – two small cards at best. You are really telling partner you think 1♠ is a much better contract than 1♥.

5. Bid 1NT with a stopper in the opponents' suit
You might make this bid after partner's 1♦ overcall – even with support. If partner's overcall was 1 of a Major you would make this bid only if you did not have support for his suit.
6. Make the jump cuebid of 3♣ with 4-card support if partner makes a 1♦ overcall of a 1♣ opening bid. In this case you have the preemptive value of the bid coupled with a possibility that partner might be able to bid 3NT if he has a maximum overcall.
7. Raise partner's 1♦ overcall to 2♦ with 3-card support
This is a bid of last resort. The opponents may not yet have found a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. Try to keep them from finding it if they have one. Even if they have found one, make them guess what to do next.
8. Pass
Sometimes you just can't take any of the previous actions and have to pass.

Let's look at a few examples, starting with the following auction:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♦	Pass	?

♠ KQ976 You know GFms? = Y in diamonds, but GFMS? = M in spades and if partner has spade support you can probably take as many tricks in spades as diamonds. A spade contract will give a better score than the diamond contract. Bid 1♠ in an attempt to improve the contract. If partner doesn't like spades he knows he can retreat to 2♦.

♥ 74
♦ Q43
♣ 863

♠ JT76 Doesn't 1NT look like a better bid than 2♦?

♥ KT4
♦ 843
♣ KQ7

♠ KQ76 Similar to the previous hand but no club stopper and strength concentrated in two suits. Bump partner up to 2♦, making it a little harder for opener to bid his heart suit if he has one.

♥ 754
♦ K43
♣ 863

♠ KQ76 Follow the Law and make the jump cuebid of 3♣ with your 9-card fit. The opponent's have not found their heart fit yet. See if you can keep them out of it.

Let's change the bidding a little.

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♣	1♥	Pass	?

♠ 976 Raise partner to 2♥.

♥ QJ3
♦ 943
♣ KQ96

♠ 97 Make a jump cuebid of 3♣.

♥ QJ83
♦ KJ976
♣ 96

♠ 9 You are terrified of the opponents finding a game in either black suit – especially spades. Follow the Law and put the pressure on opener with a jump to 4♥. If the vulnerability is unfavorable, you might settle for 3♥. Under favorable vulnerability you would make this bid even if the ♦Q were a small card.

♥ QJ783
♦ Q9762
♣ 96

♠ AKJT6 You really think 1♠ is a better contract than 1♥. Tell partner you do not like his suit and have a good suit of your own.

♥ –
♦ 97543
♣ 863

♠ QT63 You do not like partner's suit but you have enough points to bid something and have a
♥ 8 club stopper or two. Bid 1NT. You might even have a notrump game if partner has 16
♦ 9743 or 17 points.

♣ AQ73

♠ QT63 As much as you would like to bid with your 9 points, you really do not have a good bid
♥ 8 available. Pass for now. Maybe you will get a chance to do something later.

♦ AQ643

♣ 873

Advancer's Call when $G? = M^1$

When your hand is this strong (or stronger) there is a very good chance the hand belongs to your side. Your bidding should be more offensive than defensive oriented. As a result there are only three bids you should consider here:

- A bid of a new suit at either the 1 level or the 2 level (not a jump bid)
- Bid 1NT with a stopper in the opponents' suit
- A cuebid

The arguments for bidding a Major Suit at the 1 level presented in the previous topic are appropriate here as well. The only new consideration is the bid of a new suit at the 2 level. From a process of elimination you can conclude that this will either be the bid of a minor suit after partner has overcalled in a Major Suit, or a bid of 2♥ after partner has made a 1♠ overcall. In either of these cases you will be denying support for partner's Major Suit and showing a good suit of your own. When you bid at the 1 level partner will not know if your decision regarding $G?$ is M^W or M^1 . But when your bid is at the 2 level he will know that your decision is M^1 .

The 1NT bid can be made if $G? = M^W$ or M^1 . You would usually make this call when $G? = M^1$ only if you if you had a maximum of 11 HCP. This allows partner to pass, bid 2NT (invitational) or bid 3NT with relative confidence if he is satisfied with a notrump contract. You would make the bid with 12 HCP only if you had negative adjustments to your strength.

The cuebid is a general purpose bid used simply to give overcaller a chance to further describe his hand as discussed in the previous chapter. After he makes his call you will have a better idea what to do next.

Advancer's Call when $G? = M^S$

Advancer has 3 calls available for this strength range:

- A jump bid in a new suit (a jump shift)
- A jump to 2NT
- A cuebid

The jump shift shows a hand with

- An excellent 5-card or longer suit – almost always a Major

- Enough points for game if the overcaller has a fit (or at least tolerance) and an opening hand
- The values of an opening bid.

The jump to 2NT shows a balanced hand with at least one stopper in the opponents' suit and enough points for game if partner has about the values of an opening bid. If partner overcalled in a Major, the bid denies support for partner.

The cuebid is used here in the same manner as when $G? = M^1$.

Advancer's Call when $G? = Y$

When you know you want to be in a game contract you have to either bid game or make a forcing bid. Your choices are limited to:

- Jump to game in a Major Suit
- Bid 3NT
- Make a cuebid

The jumps to game always show sufficient values for game with no interest in slam. Since partner may have as few as 10 points, you need at least 15. Since partner may have as many as 17 points, you should not have more than 15. So it looks like they show exactly 15 points! In reality there is a little leeway on the high end. You might well decide just to settle for game with a poor 16 or maybe even 17 points. But with a stronger hand you should start with a cuebid. Subsequent action to get to a slam is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Obviously if you jump to game in partner's suit you are showing support for his suit. If you jump to game in your own suit (a Major of course) you are showing a solid 6-card or longer suit that does not need any help from partner. A jump to 3NT promises at least one stopper in the opponents' suit and denies support for partner's suit unless it happened to be diamonds (his only possible minor suit overcall at the 1 level).

Summary of Advancer's Offensive Bids

Here is a summary of all of advancer's offensive bids. Those usually made when $G? = M^1$ or stronger.

- New suit – good 5-card or longer suit, made to improve contract, limited to $G? = M^1$. Strength could be only M^W if made at the 1 level.
- Jump in a new suit – good 5-card or longer, made when $G? = M^S$.
- Jump to 2NT or 3NT – balanced hand with stoppers in opponents' suit(s), $G? = M^S$ or Y.
- Jump to game in a Major Suit – $G? = Y$, Slam? = N, support for partner's suit or self-sufficient suit of your own.
- Simple cuebid – general purpose strength-showing bid, asking overcaller to further describe his hand, the only forcing bid available except for a jump cuebid.
- Jump cuebid – mixed raise of partner's suit, usually a Major, $G? = M^W$.

Let's look at some examples of these bids. Suppose the auction starts:

	OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
	1♣	1♦	Pass	?
♠ KQJ76 ♥ 74 ♦ A43 ♣ 863	Bid 1♠. You have tolerance for diamonds if partner is short in spades and has to retreat to 2♦.			
♠ KQJT76 ♥ K94 ♦ 43 ♣ 863	Bid 1♠. You don't have tolerance for diamonds but your suit is good enough and your hand strong enough to rebid 2♠ if partner retreats to 2♦.			
♠ KQJT76 ♥ AQ4 ♦ 43 ♣ 63	Show your excellent suit and strong hand with a jump to 2♠.			
♠ AQJT76 ♥ AK4 ♦ 43 ♣ 63	You should have a reasonable play for 4♠ even if partner has only 10 points. Not much chance for slam but if partner has just the right hand, he might go forward.			
♠ KQ765 ♥ AQ4 ♦ 4 ♣ 9653	This is a rather difficult hand. With 11 HCP you would like to bid and 1♠ is your natural choice. But if partner is short in spades and retreats to 2♦ he will not be pleased with your hand as dummy and your suit is not good enough to rebid 2♠ in that scenario. On the other hand if partner has 3 or 4 spades with 14 or more points you may well miss a spade game if you pass. It is probably best to bid 1♠ and hope for the best.			
♠ KJ76 ♥ A74 ♦ 43 ♣ KQ63	Bid 2NT inviting partner to bid 3NT if he has about an opening hand or better (12+ points).			
♠ KJ76 ♥ A74 ♦ Q3 ♣ KQ63	Even if partner has only 10 points you should have a reasonable play for 3NT.			
♠ KJ76 ♥ A74 ♦ 43 ♣ KT63	Your best action with this hand is a bid of 1NT.			

Now let's look at some hands when partner's overcall is in a Major.

	OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
	1♣	1♠	Pass	?
♠ KJ76 ♥ A74 ♦ 43 ♣ QT63				This hand may look like a limit raise and worth a simple cuebid. But the ♣Q is probably significantly overvalued so it is likely better to treat this hand as worth 9 - 10 points and make a jump cuebid of 3♣ instead.
♠ K976 ♥ A74 ♦ KT63 ♣ 63				At first glance this hand looks a lot like the previous one. They both have the same shape and 10 HCP. But in light of the auction they are quite different. The ♣Q in the previous hand is highly overvalued while the ♦K in this hand is much more significant. You can show this hand with a simple cuebid of 2♣.
♠ QJ6 ♥ A764 ♦ KT63 ♣ 63				The lack of a 4th spade does not prevent you from making a simple cuebid of 2♣.
♠ KJ76 ♥ AQ84 ♦ KQ5 ♣ 63				With 16 points as dummy, partner should be able to make 4♠. Slam is probably out of reach so settle for the Golden Game of 4♠.
♠ 62 ♥ T94 ♦ AKQ752 ♣ 63				Show your good suit and strength with a bid of 2♦.
♠ 86 ♥ K94 ♦ AKQ752 ♣ 63				This hand is strong enough for a jump shift to 3♦. You are hoping partner has a club stopper and can bid 3NT.

ADVANCING AFTER A 2-LEVEL SUIT OVERCALL

In many ways your advances after a 2-level overcall are similar to those after a 1-level overcall but there are a few differences. Your willingness to bid is increased because partner has promised a couple of more points than if he had overcalled at the 1 level. On the other hand your competitive nature is tempered by the fact that you will have to bid at the 2 level or higher.

By now you should know that your first steps are to answer GFMS?/GFms?, revalue your hand and answer G?.

Advancer Answers GFMS? and GFms?

As always partner has promised at least a 5-card suit but since his overcall was at the 2 level, he might very well have a 6th card. While his 1-level overcall is most often in a Major, his 2-level overcall is usually a minor. The only exception is his 2♥ bid after a 1♠ opening bid. Also when he has overcalled in a minor the opening bid was a Major unless he overcalled 2♣ after a 1♦ opening bid. These observations are also not something to be memorized – they will be obvious from the auctions when they occur. They are made here simply to help you keep the remainder of this discussion in perspective.

In the rare case of partner's 2♥ bid you will know GFMS? = Y in hearts if you have at least 3-card support. When partner's overcall was in a minor, you will assume GFMS? = N unless you have at least a 5-card Major – and then GFMS? = M. Any time you have 3-card support for partner's minor you know GFms? = Y in his suit.

Advancer Revalues Her Hand

Advancer follows the usual protocol for revaluing her hand dependent on the existence of a Golden Fit and her expectation of being dummy or declarer.

Advancer Answers G?

We know that when partner has overcalled at the 2 level he suggests the strength of an opening bid, but we will cut him a little slack and give him a minimum of 12 points. Again, as opposed to an opening bid upper limit of 21 points, he is limited to 17 points. So we can readily derive the following table for our answer to G?:

POINTS	G?
13 ⁺	Y
11 - 12	M ^S
10	M ^I
8 - 9	M ^W
0 - 7	N

Notice that we keep 2-point intervals for the weak and strong M ranges – leaving just the 1-point value for the mild M range. Rather than devote a lot of effort discussing what should be done with this specific range, it is easier to either upgrade this hand to the M^S category or downgrade it to the M^W category based on the quality of the hand.

Again, this is not a list to be memorized. Just work it out when needed. What you do need to memorize is that partner has shown 12 - 17 points with his 2-level overcall. The rest will fall into place.

Advancer's Call when G? = N

About the only action you will consider taking when you have decided G? = N is a raise of partner's suit.

Suppose an auction started

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♠	2♥	2♠	?

♠ 43 The opponents obviously have a spade fit but you have at least a 9-card heart fit. Follow
 ♥ K975 the Law on both points and bid 3♥. This is simply a competitive bid. Admittedly you
 ♦ 85 would make the same bid with a little stronger hand where you wanted to make a weak
 ♣ Q9653 invitational bid – so partner will not know your intentions. There are methods to
 distinguish between the two hand types but they are beyond the scope of this book.

Consider this auction:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♠	2♣	Pass	?

♠ 43 Your hand is probably useless to partner in a club contract but his hand should be quite
 ♥ 975 helpful to you in a diamond contract. Bid 2♦. This is one of those rare hands where you
 ♦ KJT9853 bid your own suit even without any game interest. Partner should realize that you do
 ♣ 3 not have support for his suit. You cannot have club support and be trying for a better
 score since diamonds and clubs score equally.

Advancer's Call when G? = M^w

When your hand is this weak you would like to bid something but your options are very limited since you will be bidding at the 2 level or higher. In order of priority:

1. Raise partner's Major Suit (hearts)
 By all means raise your partner if you have 4-card or longer support so that you satisfy the Law. With 5-card support consider a preemptive jump to game.
2. Bid a decent 5-card or longer Major of your own at the 2 level
 This will be an option only if partner overcalled in a minor. So you need to have either a tolerance for his suit if he does not like yours and retreats to 3 of his suit or a very good suit that you can rebid at the 3 level.
3. Raise partner's minor suit
 This is a bid of last resort. Use the Law to decide on the level of your bid. The opponents may not have yet found a Golden Fit in a Major Suit. Try to keep them from finding it if they have one. Even if they have found one, make them guess what to do next.
4. Pass
 Sometimes you just can't take any of the previous actions and have to pass.

Here are a few examples.

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♠	2♥	Pass	?

♠ 976 Don't violate the Law if you don't have to. Pass for now. If responder had bid 2♠ you
 ♥ QJ3 would bid 3♥ following the second point of the Law. If opener rebids his spades and his
 ♦ 943 bid gets passed around to you, a 3♥ bid would not be unreasonable – although you hate
 ♣ KQ96 your flat hand.

♠ 9 You have at least a 9-card heart fit. Follow the Law and raise to 3♥.
 ♥ QJ83
 ♦ 9743
 ♣ K964

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♠	2♣	Pass	?

♠ 96 Try for a better score and bid 2♥. You don't have a problem if partner is very short in
 ♥ KQJ93 hearts and retreats to 3♣.
 ♦ 943
 ♣ Q96

♠ 96 Again try for a better score with a 2♥ bid. If partner retreats to 3♣ your suit is good
 ♥ AQJT93 enough to bid 3♥ at your next turn.
 ♦ 9743
 ♣ 6

♠ 9 Give opener a problem by raising partner to 3♣. You would make this same bid if your
 ♥ QJ83 Major Suits were reversed and your hand might be a little weaker for this same bid.
 ♦ 9743 Responder passed but could have 4 or 5 points – maybe a little more with just nothing
 ♣ K964 to bid over partner's 2♣ bid. Your partner might be on a minimum for his overcall or
 have 17 points. How is opener supposed to know for sure who has what? He will have to guess at the 3
 level and he may guess wrong.

Advancer's Call when G? = M^S

When your hand is this strong (or stronger) you have every expectation that the hand belongs to your side. So your bidding should be more offensive than defensive oriented. As a result there are only three bids you should consider here:

- A jump bid in a new suit (a jump shift)
- 2NT
- A cuebid

From a practical viewpoint a jump shift will almost always be to 3 of a Major. The only exception would be a jump to 3♦ after partner made a 2♣ overcall following an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠. Advancer would not want to jump shift into 4 of a minor.

The 2NT bid shows a balanced hand with at least one stopper in the opponents' suit and enough points for game if partner has a couple of points above the minimum required for his overcall. If partner's overcall was 2♥ the bid denies heart support.

As usual the cuebid just asks opener to further describe his hand.

Note that a jump cuebid is not included as an option after partner has made a 2-level overcall. It would always be at the 3 level in a suit that was higher ranking than partner's – therefore forcing to the 4 level.

Advancer's Call when G? = Y

Your choices here are no different from those when partner made a 1-level overcall. You have to either bid game or make a forcing bid. Again your choices are limited to:

- Jump to game in a Major Suit
- Bid 3NT
- Make a cuebid

When partner's overcall was at the 1 level, you needed 15 points to reach the partnership level of 25 for a Golden Game. Now that partner has overcalled at the 2 level you can get by with 13. So the jump to game in a Major can be made with 13 to about 16 or 17 points. With a stronger hand start with a cuebid.

The 3NT bid promises a stopper in the opponents' suit and denies 3-card support for partner if his overcall was 2♥.

Summary of Advancer's Offensive Bids

Here is a summary of all of advancer's offensive bids. Those made when G? = M^S or Y.

- Jump in a new suit – good 5-card or longer (6 preferred) suit made when G? = M^S
- 2NT or 3NT – balanced hand with stoppers in the opponents' suit(s), G? = M^S or Y
- Jump to game in a Major Suit – G? = Y, Slam? = N, support for partner's suit or self-sufficient suit of your own
- Cuebid – general purpose strength-showing bid asking overcaller to further describe his hand, the only forcing bid available

Let's look at some examples of these bids. Suppose the auction starts:

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♠	2♥	Pass	?

♠ 43 With 11 points in support of hearts you do not have quite enough to insist on game but
 ♥ K975 too much for a raise to 3♥, which would just be competitive. Start with a 2♠ cuebid. If
 ♦ A5 partner denies game interest by bidding 3♥, you will pass. If partner bids anything else
 ♣ Q9653 your next bid will be 4♥.
 Change the ♣Q to the ♣A and you are strong enough for game – so just bid 4♥.

♠ A63 Not quite enough to bid 3NT. But you do have a stopper in the opponents' suit and
 ♥ 75 enough to invite game with a bid of 2NT. Change one of the small cards in any suit to
 ♦ AJ7 the queen of that suit and you could bid 3NT.
 ♣ KT852

OPENER	PARTNER	RESPONDER	YOU
1♥	2♣	Pass	?

♠ AKT863 Jump to 3♠. Highly invitational. Change the ♠T to the ♠Q and your hand is worth a
 ♥ 75 jump to 4♠.
 ♦ 97
 ♣ Q97

♠ AJT863 Your suit is not quite good enough to stand alone in a 4♠ contract unless partner has
 ♥ 75 extra strength. Start with a 2♥ cuebid. If partner shows a minimum with a 3♣ bid you
 ♦ K7 can pass. After any other rebid by partner try 4♠. It may not make, but you should
 ♣ Q97 have a reasonable play for it.