



# Basic Bidding 12



By Kitty & Steve Cooper

What to Bid When the Opponents Open

Annoying, isn't it? You had just decided that you were going to open the bidding 1♦, when your opponent opens 1♠ in front of you. What to do?

When both sides are bidding (the term for this is a competitive auction), game is unlikely unless there is a good distributional fit. Finding an eight card major suit fit is, as always, very important, since playing in a major will usually produce the best score.

Just because you have a hand you would have opened is not a sufficient reason to bid now. Your strategy has changed. There are only four reasons to bid once the opponents have opened:

1. *Balance of Power.* Our side might have most of the strength.
2. *Lead Direction.* It could be important to tell partner what to lead.
3. *Sacrifice.* We may have a good sacrifice versus their game, slam, or partscore.
4. *Obstruction.* Our bidding may make it hard for them to get to the right spot.

The tools at our disposal for competing once the opponents have bid a suit are:

1. The notrump overcall.
2. The simple suit overcall.
3. The takeout double.
4. The jump overcall.
5. Various two suited bids.

### Hand Evaluation in a Competitive Auction

Never forget to keep reevaluating your hand during the auction when both sides are bidding. Particularly is your holding in the opponents' suit. Tend to discount queens and jacks in their suit completely unless you have higher honors or length with a notrump bid. Either devalue or upgrade the king of the opponents' suit, depending on who you think has the ace.

Shortness in the opponents' suit is a useful value, particularly once your side has a trump fit. If they have bid and raised a suit which you are long in, your partner will be short in it. Therefore length in the opponents' suit is good, when both opponents also have length.

### Overcalling in Notrump

The reason to overcall 1NT is to let partner know that your side probably has the balance of power. Since the opponents have opened there is less room for accuracy, therefore the range of the notrump overcall is stretched to include as much as 18 HCP. Also a hand with a bad 15 HCP does not have to make this bid. Respond to a 1NT overcall just as if partner had opened 1NT - in other words 2♣ is still Stayman, transfers are still on (if you play them), and so forth. There is one new bid, a cue bid of the opponents' suit (or the transfer to it). Most players use this for a good hand with shortness in the opponents' suit but no five card major, therefore it is looking for the right game to play.

There is one big difference between opening 1NT and overcalling 1NT - when you overcall you promise a stopper in the opponents' suit. In other words, you guarantee that they cannot cash the first five tricks in that suit.

When you overcall 1NT, partner often knows immediately how high your side can compete and whether or not game is possible. Therefore make this bid whenever you can, with the proviso that bidding a decent five card major is more important.

The downside of overcalling 1NT is that your LHO is well situated to double for penalties with 10+ points. It is much easier to double when there is no trump suit to ruff away long suit winners. Your partner has the job of running for safety when this happens; this means bidding a five card or longer suit with a weak hand. Stayman and other conventions no longer apply, 2♣ may be a long suit or may just be a weak hand that will redouble on the next round if doubled to look for a better place to play. There are a number of fancier escape mechanisms people play here. The simplest one

is to play your normal methods of transfers and Stayman but use redouble to force two clubs when you have five or more clubs or diamonds; if you have diamonds you bid 2♦ next.

With no long suit to show you pass, expecting partner to rescue himself by either bidding his long suit or redoubling to ask you to bid four card suits up the line.

### The Simple Overcall

The simple overcall is made on a hand with a five card or longer suit that would have opened the bidding, or a hand which is just a few points below that strength with a good suit. The reason you prefer to have a hand that would have opened is to tell partner that your side may still have the balance of power. The rea-

son to shade this with a good suit is to tell partner what to lead. If partner has already passed then you might overcall with an understrength hand to look for a sacrifice or be obstructive.

Having an opening bid is not an adequate reason to overcall. A good guideline is that with 15 or more points you should find a bid unless the opponents have opened your best suit. With fewer points, you can pass if there is no call that fits your hand.

When is your suit good enough to overcall even though it is understrength in points? Usually with two of the top three honors plus some intermediates. Imagine how you would feel if LHO responds 1NT and RHO raises to 3NT. If you would be

(See Basic on page 16)

## Improve Your Play



By Larry Matheny  
Fort Collins, Colorado

### A Good Stop

There are many conventions that enable us to reach good contracts. Fortunately, there are also agreements that keep us out of some not so good contracts.

	♠A854		
	♥AQ6		
	♦Q4		
	♣AQJ9		
♠QJ10		♠9	
♥109		♥87543	
♦A10963		♦875	
♣874		♣10652	
	♠K7632		
	♥KJ2		
	♦KJ2		
	♣K3		

South	West	North	East
1♠	Pass	1♣	Pass
4NT	Pass	4♣	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♣	Pass
Pass	Pass	5♠	Pass

### Opening lead: ♦A

**Bidding:** At the end of a long pairs session, *North's* jump to 4♠ woke up *South*. This bid showed 19+ points in support of spades so *South's* thoughts went immediately to slam. With controls in all of the side suits, *South* used Roman Keycard Blackwood. *North's* response showed three keycards so one was missing. *South* continued with the trump queen ask and was disappointed when *North* denied holding her highness. *South* reluctantly gave up and stopped at the five-level.

**Play:** *West* led the ace of diamonds and then waited on his spade trick. Many *North/South* pairs bid the slam that would have made if the queen of trumps could have been captured. Unless you hold ten trumps, it's usually best to avoid bidding slams when missing a keycard and the trump queen. For those who think the decision to stop too pessimistic, remember *North* could have held the ace of diamonds and his spades could have been ♠J854.

**The winning strategy** at match points (pairs) is to not press for close games and slams, but instead take your plus scores. Pushing to low percentage contracts is an impulse from our rubber bridge days.

## DENVER UNIT 361

### WINTER SECTIONAL BRIDGE TOURNAMENT

January 8-11, 2015

Jefferson County Fairgrounds, Exhibit Hall  
15200 W. 6th Ave., Golden, CO  
[www.denverbridge.com](http://www.denverbridge.com)

Day	Time	Session
<b>THURSDAY</b> JANUARY 8, 2015	7:00 pm	Swiss Teams (single session)
<b>FRIDAY</b> JANUARY 9, 2015	10:00 am	Stratified Pairs (single session) Stratified 299er Pairs (single session) Friday Knockouts (Round 1)
	2:00 pm	Stratified Pairs (single session) Stratified 299er Pairs (single session) Friday Knockouts (Round 2)
	7:00 pm	Stratified Pairs (single session) Stratified 299er Pairs (single session) Friday Knockouts (Finals)
<b>SATURDAY</b> JANUARY 10, 2015	10:00 am	Stratified Open Pairs (1 <sup>st</sup> of two sessions) Stratified Pairs (single session) Stratified 299er Pairs (single session)
	2:00 pm	Stratified Open Pairs (2 <sup>nd</sup> of two sessions) Stratified Pairs (single session) Stratified 299er Pairs (single session)
<b>SUNDAY</b> JANUARY 11, 2015	10:00 and TBA	Strati-Flighted Swiss Teams A and Ax play together; B/C/D play together 299er Teams (if enough teams)

Pairs: ACBL members \$10; Non-members and un-paid members \$14  
Special pricing for youth AND junior (under 25) ACBL members  
Sunday Swiss teams: \$104 per team, includes lunch

<b>Director in Charge</b>	Bill Michael	
<b>Tournament Chair</b>	Allen Kane	303-694-6478
<b>Partnerships</b>	Shirley Heinsohn	303-475-6630
<b>Stratifications</b>	Pairs	A=2000+; B=750-2000; C=0-750
	Teams	A=3500+; Ax=0-3500; B=1250-2000; C=750-1250; D=0-750
<b>Stratified Games</b>	Stratified by average masterpoints	
<b>Strati-Flighted Games</b>	Any player over 2000 MPs must play in A or AX, Strats by average MPs	

KO events may be handicapped Scent-free event  
Sanction No. S 1501031 Please be considerate of your fellow players

## TUCSON WINTER SECTIONAL

January 8-11, 2015 - Holiday Inn - Palo Verde

### Daily Schedule

Day	Time	Session
<b>Thursday—January 8, 2015</b>	9:00 AM	Stratified Pairs (Single Session) Stratified 199'er Pairs (Single Session) and <b>Knockout I</b> (Round 1)
	1:30 PM	Stratified Pairs (Single Session) Stratified 199'er Pairs (Single Session) and <b>Knockout I</b> (Round 2) & Single Session Swiss Team
<b>Friday—January 9, 2015</b>	9:00 AM	Stratified Pairs (Single Session) Stratified 199'er Pairs (Single Session) and <b>Knockout I</b> (Round 3) & Single Session Swiss Team
	1:30 PM	Stratified Pairs (Single Session) Stratified 199'er Pairs (Single Session) and <b>Knockout II</b> (Round 1)
<b>Saturday—January 10, 2015</b>	9:00 AM	Stratified Pairs (Single Session) Stratified 199'er Pairs (Single Session) & <b>Knockout II</b> (Round 2) & Single Session Swiss Team
	1:30 PM	Stratified Pairs (Single Session) Stratified 199'er Pairs (Single Session) & <b>Knockout II</b> (Round 3) & Single Session Swiss Team
<b>Sunday—January 11, 2015</b>	9:00 AM & TBA	Strati-flighted Swiss Teams (Two Sessions) Stratified 299'er Swiss Teams (Two Sessions)

**12:30PM LECTURES**  
THU-FRI-SAT

Free coffee and tea, bagels, muffins, salmon, yummy candy, lectures, pre-dealt hands with hand records and a complimentary lunch buffet for our double session Sunday Swiss Team event.

**Holiday Inn - Palo Verde**  
4550 S. Palo Verde Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85714  
(520) 746-1161 or (800) 465-4329

Rooms \$79.00 double or single. Rooms include Buffet Breakfast and Wi-Fi. Blocked rooms reserved until Dec 29. Phone reservations, use booking code "ABC" to get the preferred rates.

**Stratified Events:** A=1500+; B=500-1500; C=0-500; 199'er Pairs: D=100-200; E=20-100; F=0-20

**Knockouts:** Bracketed by average masterpoint holdings of all team members - Top bracket may be handicapped

**Strati-flighted Swiss Teams:** (All scored at Victory points) A=3000+; Ax=0-3000; B=750-1500; C=300-750; D=0-300

**199'er Swiss Teams:** (All scored at Victory points) E=100-200; F=0-100

**Sanction # 1501021**