

# Overcalls – Ron Kral

| Vul None<br>South deals<br>Lead: ♥A | ♠ KQ62<br>♥ J10<br>♦ K7543<br>♣ Q8 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table> |                 | N  |  | W |  | E |  | S |  | ♠ 73<br>♥ Q98<br>♦ Q62<br>♣ 75432 | <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <th style="text-decoration: underline;">West</th> <th style="text-decoration: underline;">North</th> <th style="text-decoration: underline;">East</th> <th style="text-decoration: underline;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥<sup>2</sup></td> <td>3♥<sup>3</sup></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠<sup>1</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠<sup>4</sup></td> </tr> </table> | West | North | East | South | 2♥ <sup>2</sup> | 3♥ <sup>3</sup> | Pass | 1♠ <sup>1</sup> | Pass | Pass | Pass | 4♠ <sup>4</sup> |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-----------------|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|------|-------|------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|------|------|-----------------|
|                                     | N                                  |   |                 |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |  |      |       |      |       |                 |                 |      |                 |      |      |      |                 |
| W                                   |                                    | E   |                 |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |  |      |       |      |       |                 |                 |      |                 |      |      |      |                 |
|                                     | S                                  |   |                 |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |  |      |       |      |       |                 |                 |      |                 |      |      |      |                 |
| West                                | North                              | East  | South           |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |  |      |       |      |       |                 |                 |      |                 |      |      |      |                 |
| 2♥ <sup>2</sup>                     | 3♥ <sup>3</sup>                    | Pass  | 1♠ <sup>1</sup> |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |  |      |       |      |       |                 |                 |      |                 |      |      |      |                 |
| Pass                                | Pass                               | Pass  | 4♠ <sup>4</sup> |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |  |      |       |      |       |                 |                 |      |                 |      |      |      |                 |
| ♠ 105<br>♥ AK7432<br>♦ 108<br>♣ KJ9 | ♠ AJ984<br>♥ 65<br>♦ AJ9<br>♣ A106 |   |                 | <sup>1</sup> 12-20 points, 5+ spades<br><sup>2</sup> 12-16 points, 5+ hearts<br><sup>3</sup> Cue-bidding the opponent's suit shows a "limit" raise or better in spades – 10+ points, 3+ spades<br><sup>4</sup> OK, I'm willing to play game opposite a limit raise |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |  |      |       |      |       |                 |                 |      |                 |      |      |      |                 |

An overcall is made AFTER the opponents have made an opening bid. There are many reasons to make an overcall:

- 1) To interfere with the opponent's bidding.
- 2) To help your partner defend if the opponent's win the contract.
- 3) To win the contract, either at a partscore or even a game. Sometimes the overcaller's can even bid a slam!
- 4) To take a profitable sacrifice.

Every partnership has two different bidding systems. A partnership's primary bidding system is used when the opponents are "silent" and pass throughout. This is called an "uncontested" auction. The partnership's second, alternate bidding system is used when the opponents overcall and disrupt the proceedings. The alternate system is MUCH less accurate than the primary bidding system.

Many books recommend a conservative approach to overcalls saying you need almost an opening hand to make an overcall. However, I personally recommend (and use) a very aggressive style. Making aggressive overcalls will improve your results tremendously because you jar the opponents out of their comfort zone. As usual, you **MUST** discuss and agree with your partner as to the aggressiveness level you both use and expect.

Here are the general requirements for making overcalls:

- 1) A simple one-over-one overcall (for example, 1♠ over 1♦) promises:
  - a. 5 or more cards in the overcalled suit
  - b. A good suit you want partner to lead (for example, KQxxx or better) and 8+HCP (most books say 10+HCP) **OR** a bad suit and 12+HCP. The worse your suit is, the more points you must have.
- 2) A two-over-one overcall (for example, 2♦ over 1♠) promises:
  - a. 5 or more cards in the overcalled suit. Vulnerable, it should be a "chunky" suit
  - b. An opening hand (12+HCP)
- 3) A **single jump** overcall (for example, 2♠ over 1♣) promises:
  - a. A 6-card suit
  - b. LESS than an opening hand (6-10 HCP). NOTE: This implies if you overcall 1♠ then rebid 2♠ you have a GOOD hand.
- 4) A **double jump** overcall (for example, 3♣ over 1♥) promises:
  - a. A 7-card suit
  - b. LESS than an opening hand (6-10 HCP)
- 5) A **triple jump** overcall (for example, 4♥ over 1♣) promises:
  - a. An 8 or 9-card suit
  - b. Any hand from 6 HCP on up that's not interested in slam no matter what advancer has.
- 6) A 1NT overcall (**OR**, a 2NT overcall over a weak 2 bid) promises:
  - a. 15-18 HCP **AND**
  - b. A "stopper" in the opponent's bid suit
  - c. NOTE: Whatever response systems you play over an OPENING 1NT (Stayman, Jacoby transfers, et.al.) are all ON over 1NT AND 2NT OVERCALLS just as if partner had opened 1NT or 2NT.
- 7) With 17 or more HCP, DOUBLE first than bid a suit. Overcalls are limited to about 16 HCP.
- 8) With 19 or more HCP, you can DOUBLE first, then bid 1NT. Shows MORE than 15-18 HCP AND a stopper.