



# Adventures in Bridge

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## ***This Week in Bridge***

### **(174) New Suits by Advancer**

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Level: 1

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#### **General**

When partner makes a 1-level overcall it is a very wide-ranging action – about 7 to 18 HCP. Advancer generally assumes Overcaller has at least 10 HCP, to narrow down the range to a more reasonable spread. Here we look at what types of hands Advancer can have and how to describe them.

#### **Advancer Has a Minimum Hand, 6-7 Points**

With 6-7 points, Advancer may choose to raise partner's suit with a fit. Without a fit for partner's suit Advancer generally passes with 7 or fewer points.

#### **Advancer Has Slightly More Values, 8-9 Points**

When Advancer has a slightly stronger hand, 8-9 points, with a fit they can still make a simple raise of partner's overcall; but without a fit for partner's suit, Advancer wants to show values but not force the auction. In this case, Advancer tends to bid 1NT, promising 8-11 points, no fit for partner's suit, and usually a stopper in Opener's suit. But with no better options Advancer may choose to bid 1NT even without a stopper in the opponent's suit, especially if that suit is a minor since that suit does not have to have much length.

#### *Examples*

1♣ 1♠ P 2♠

This 2♠ bid shows at least 3-card ♠ support and 6-9 points.

1♣ 1♠ P 1NT

A 1NT bid shows 8-11 points, at most 2-card ♠, and usually a stopper in the opponent's ♣ suit.

Since as Advancer you assume partner has about 10 or more points for their overcall, then you need about two points more to bid 1NT, 8-11 points instead of 6-9 points.

## Advancer has Good Values, 10+ Points

### New Suit Forcing by Advancer (NSF)

A common approach for many partnerships is to play a new suit by Advancer at the 2-level as forcing for 1-round. In that case, Advancer's new suit shows at least a 5-card suit and at least 10 points.

*Note: A new suit at the 1-level shows a good 4+card suit and 8+ HCP - it is usually played as forcing for 1-round.*

### Cuebid of the Opponent's Suit, Limit Raise or Better (Q=LR+)

By adopting this agreement, NSF, Advancer has a clear way to force the auction by bidding a new suit of their own. This allows a cuebid of the opponent's suit to be used to show a good hand with a fit for partner's suit - a cuebid showing a limit raise or better (Q=LR+ is shorthand for this agreement).

With this agreement, with some distributional hands Advancer must bid 1NT with 8-9 points - limiting their hand in values, but not being able to show their long suit.

### Advanced: Alternative Approach, New Suit Non-Forcing Constructive (NFC)

Some partnerships choose to bid a new suit as Non-Forcing, but showing constructive values. (On the convention card this is the middle box as treatment by the Advancer's new suit.) In this case, a new suit is limited and non-forcing, showing 8-13 points. This approach allows the Advancer to bid a suit more aggressively with a 5+card suit and 8-9 points, even at the 2-level.

#### Example

1♣ 1♠ P 2♥

Playing NFC, this 2♥ bid shows 8-13 points and at least a 5+card suit.

Playing new suits NFC, Advancer must do something forcing with a 14+ point strong hand. Most partnerships that play NFC use a cuebid as EITHER a Limit Raise or better (LR+) OR any 14+ point hand. This adds some complexity to the bidding with a strong hand as Advancer.

#### Example

1♣ 1♠ P 2♣  
P 2♠ P 3♥

The 2♣ cuebid is not immediately clear whether Advancer has LR+ or 14+ points any shape, so Advancer clarifies on the second round of bidding.

*Note: When partner makes a 2-level overcall, they have promised more values and Advancer can then bid a new suit, forcing for 1-round (1F), with 8 or more points.*

## **Conclusion**

When bidding as Advancer, it can be difficult to describe your shape and strength while keeping the auction at a low level because partner may not have much for their overcall. Partnerships can choose to play the simpler approach of New Suits Forcing (NSF) and Q+LR+ (a good agreement to start with) or the more complex approach (the modern expert standard) of New Suit Non-Forcing Constructive (NFC). This more modern approach requires more judgment by both members of the partnership, but allows Advancer more flexibility with distribution hands. Be sure you and partner have an agreement about your approach to bidding by Advancer after a 1-level overcall.