

Bridge New Stuff

Weak Jump Overcalls

Shows a hand similar to a weak 2 opener, and can be done in all 4 suits. See web page under improvers.

Checkback Stayman

Bidding 2♣ after opener rebids 1NT. Asks opener to further describe their major holding. See web page under improvers.

System On

Playing Stayman and Red Suit Transfers in situations other than when partner has opened 1NT (or 2NT) and the next player has passed. Usually when a NT bid has been made by partner but no suits have been bid naturally by either side. See web page under improvers.

The Wriggle

A convention where partner has opened 1NT and opponents have doubled. Allows you to make a weak takeout in the minor suits. See web page under improvers.

Card Lengths – Doubling and Overcalls

An overcall guarantees at least 5 of the suit bid, and usually denies another 4 card suit.

A double of an opponent's major promises exactly four cards in the other major (if you have 5, overcall instead)

A double of an opponent's minor promises at least 4-3 in the majors.

A 1NT overcall (16+ points) promises a "stop" in opponent's suit and denies a 5 card major (but may have 4 – use Stayman to check)

When opponents overcall your partner's opening bid, a suit by you will show 5+ cards. A double will show exactly 4 cards in the unbid major (if there is one), and 4-3 in the majors if neither have been bid.

Blackwood

A convention allowing you to investigate Slam (bidding 6 or 7). 4NT asks partner to respond according to how many aces they have. 5♣ is 0 or 4, 5♦ is 1 and so forth.

A lot of people play a version called Roman Keycard Blackwood, also known as 5 Ace Blackwood. In this the King of trumps also counts as an ace, and the responses are 5♣ is 0 or 3, 5♦ is 1 or 4, 5♥ is 2 without the trump Queen, and 5♠ is 2 and the trump Queen.

Unusual No trump / Michaels

“Two suited” overcalls – conventional bids which show at least 5-5 in two unbid suits. They are very useful when they come up, but such hands are quite rare.

Unusual No trump

The unusual no trump is a jump overcall in NT and shows a hand with five cards in each of the lowest two *unbid* suits, so:

North 1♥, East 2NT shows a hand with 5+ Clubs and 5+ Diamonds.

North 1♦, East 2NT shows a hand with 5+ Clubs and 5+ Hearts.

Point range is the same as for a normal overcall.

Partner bids whichever of the two suits they prefer. Note that like doubles, this bid is forcing.

Michaels

Michaels is a cue bid (bid of opponent's suit) and shows a hand with 5-5 in the majors (if no major has been bid), or 5 of the unbid major and 5 in an (as yet) unspecified minor, so:

North 1♥, East 2♥ shows a hand with 5+ Spades and 5+ of a minor

North 1♦, East 2♦ shows a hand with 5+ Hearts and 5+ Spades.

Point range is the same as for a normal overcall.

If partner wants to play in the major they bid it. If they want to play in the minor they bid 3♣ which partner will pass if their suit is clubs, or convert to 3♦ if it is diamonds.

Note that like doubles, this bid is forcing.

4th Suit Forcing

This is a bid of the fourth suit by the same side in an auction. After three bids looking for a suit fit, it is highly unlikely that a fit in the fourth suit will be found. If the player had a stop in the fourth suit, they would just bid NT, so a bid of that suit is asking for a stop in that suit. More generally it means tell me more, but with a particular interest in a stop. So in:

N	E	S	W
1♦	P	1♥	P
1♠	P	2♣	P

the 2♣ is the fourth suit and is asking for a stop for no trumps. If you have a stop, bid 2NT, if not, you would bid 2♥ if you had 5 hearts, or something else if not.

There is one exception to the 4th Suit Forcing. In the sequence

N	E	S	W
1♣	P	1♦	P
1♥	P	1♠	P

The 1♠ bid is natural, showing a 4+ card suit. If you want to bid 4th Suit Forcing in this situation, bid 2♠ instead of 1♠.

DABs

DABs (Directional Asking Bids) are similar to 4th suit forcing, but used where the opponents have entered the bidding. If an opponent has overcalled, a bid of their suit is asking for a stop in that suit, with a view to playing in NT. So:

N	E	S	W
1♥	1♠	2♣	P
2♠			

would be asking for a spade stop with a view to playing in NT.