



Reminder

When the opponents open 1 of a suit and you have a hand with values worth showing...

Simple Suit Overcall

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1♥	1♠

Example West

♠	K Q 9 5 4
♥	9 5
♦	K J 9
♣	7 4 3

A "simple" suit overcall shows at least five cards in a quality suit and can be anything from 8-14HCP or 9-7 losers.

It's not forcing, isn't alerted and is not announced.

Jump Suit Overcall

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1♥	2♠

A single jump suit overcall

Example West

♠	K Q 9 5 4 3
♥	9 5
♦	K J
♣	A 4 3

shows at least six cards in a quality suit, some players will play it as "weak", something like a weak two opener, and other players will play it as "intermediate" – 11-15 HCPs, 7 or less losers. It is not forcing, is not alerted and is not announced.

1NT Overcall

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1♥	1NT

Example West

♠	K Q 9
♥	K J 9 5
♦	K J 6
♣	A 4 3

A 1NT overcall promises a balanced hand with at least one stop in the opening suit and 16-18HCPs. It is likely to be 6 or 5 losers. It is not forcing, isn't alerted and is not announced.

Double

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
		1♥	X

West

♠	K Q 9 5
♥	
♦	K J 3 2
♣	A 7 4 3 2

Double of an opening suit call shows a shortage in the bid suit, but support for any other suit. It shows an opening quality hand, at least 11HCPs or 7+ losers. It is forcing, isn't alerted and is not announced.

The double bid is also used for extraordinarily strong hands, or even highly distributional hands as the player doubling will always get another bid.



But there's more....

This tool kit can get you a long way. However, players have added conventions for the situation where West is holding a two-suited hand (at least 5:5) and wishes to tell partner that the hand is two suited, and to give partner as much information as possible about the two suits in one bid.

Showing the lowest two un-bid suits

When the opponents open the auction, they show at least one above average hand. If the other pair can compete, it is because they have most of the "power", or it's because they have values through "shape" advantages. Often this "shape" comes in the form of a single valuable suit, but sometimes there are two long un-bid suits in the hand.

The Unusual Two No Trumps

is a conventional (artificial) overcall which shows a two-suited hand in the two lowest un-bid suits.

The "natural" meaning of a 2NT overcall shows a balanced hand with 20-22 points. This is so rare, that assigning a conventional meaning is an improvement in the tool kit!

The two-suited hand will have at least 5 cards in each suit and typically 8-16 high-card points (HCP). Point count agreements vary, so you should discuss the method with your partner.



It is commonly agreed that Unusual Two No Trumps shows a hand that hold the prospect of winning the auction. When made on very weak hands, the opponents may win the auction and are warned about the unbalanced holding of the bidder. Given that the Unusual 2NT is forcing, some partnerships apply no upper limit to its high card strength.

It's definitely alertable.

East

♠ 7 6 5
♥ A 9 8 7 6
♦
♣ K Q J 10 9

For example

In this sequence the bidder is showing five cards or more in each of Clubs and Hearts.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	2NT		

East

♠ 7 6 5
♥ A 9 8 7 6
♦
♣ K Q J 10 9

West

♠ A 8 4
♥ Q J 10 5 2
♦ K Q 9
♣ 6 5



Responding to the Unusual Two No Trumps

The bid is forcing, so West must find a bid.

With a ten-card fit in hearts and seven losers, West raises to game.

With a weaker hand, West should bid to show preference between the two implied suits.

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	2NT	Pass	4♥

The Unusual Two No Trumps does not come up very often, but it is very useful when it does. It should be possible to spot it, as this will

always be a strange bid.

NOTE When opponents open, for example, 1♠, partner passes, and opponents raise to 4♠, an overcall of 4NT has a similar message: "two places to play". Partner bids their lowest ranking quality suit and the 4NT bidder passes or corrects.

A Michaels cue bid

is a conventional (artificial) overcall that shows certain other combinations of two-suited hand. It was first devised by Mike Michaels. It is alerted.

The basic requirement for a Michaels cue bid is:

a two-suited hand with at least 5 cards in each suit and typically, (see below) 8-16 high-card points (HCP).



High Card Points (and Losers)

Point count agreements vary, so you should discuss the method with your partner. It is commonly agreed that a Michaels cue bid is constructive and should be made on hands that hold the prospect of winning the auction.

Many pairs agree the simple 8-16 HCP range. However, others may choose not to use Michaels with a 13-15HCP:

To use the convention, when the opponents make a one level suit opening, bid the same suit at the two level.

East	
♠	K Q J 10 9
♥	A 9 8 7 6
♦	
♣	7 6 5
West	
♠	A 8 4
♥	6 5
♦	K Q 9
♣	Q J 10 5 2

0-8HCP When made on very weak hands, the chances are the opponents will win the auction and will have been warned about the unbalanced holding of the Michaels bidder.


8-12HCP Use Michaels, passing partner's response

13-15HCP Bid the higher suit, followed by the lower suit

16+HCP Use Michaels, re-bidding as necessary



When opponents have opened a Minor Suit

<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	2♦		
<u>N</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>W</u>
1♦	2♦	Pass	4♠

Over an opponent's minor opening the cue-bid shows both majors.

With an eight-card fit and seven losers, West raises to game.

(1♣-2♣ also shows hearts & spades.)

When opponents have opened a Major Suit

Over an opponent's major opening a cue-bid shows the other major and an unspecified minor suit. For example, 1♠-2♠ shows hearts and either clubs or diamonds.

Michaels does not come up very often, but it is so useful when it does that it's worth adopting. It is usually easy to spot as well so there is less chance than with some conventional bids of partner failing to alert and follow up!

Responding (Advancing) to Michaels Cue Bid

It is definitely forcing, partner doesn't want to play in the opponents' suit. If you have a fit in the un-bid major, "raise" it on an assumption of 7 losers in partner's hand.

If the cue-bid shows a major you cannot support, make a 2NT (alerted) enquiry about the minor suit. Then pass or correct.



Summary Michaels Cue Bid with Unusual 2NT

<u>Opponents</u> <u>Open</u>	<u>You Hold</u> <u>five+</u>	<u>And</u> <u>five+</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1♣	♦	♥	2NT	Showing Diamonds and Hearts
1♣	♦	♠	1♠	There's no 2-suited bid for this. Re-bid Diamonds if necessary.
1♣	♥	♠	2♣	Shows both majors.
1♦	♣	♥	2NT	Showing Clubs and Hearts
1♦	♣	♠	1♠	There's no 2-suited bid for this. Re-bid Diamonds if necessary.
1♦	♥	♠	2♦	Shows both majors.
1♥	♣	♦	2NT	Showing Diamonds and Clubs
1♥	♣	♠	2♥	Showing Spades and a minor.
1♥	♦	♠	2♥	Showing Spades and a minor.
1♠	♣	♦	2NT	Showing Clubs and Diamonds
1♠	♣	♥	2♠	Showing Hearts and a minor.
1♠	♦	♥	2♠	Showing Hearts and a minor.



Ghestem. (TD's don't like it!)

The table above has 2 cases with no two-suited overcall & 4 cases showing a long minor, but not which. Ghestem is more "complete":

<u>Opponents</u> <u>Open</u>	<u>You Hold</u> <u>five+</u>	<u>And</u> <u>five+</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1♣	♦	♥	2NT	Showing Diamonds and Hearts
1♣	♦	♠	3♣	3♣ shows that the two long suits are the top and bottom rank.
1♣	♥	♠	2♣	Shows both majors.
1♦	♣	♥	2NT	Showing Clubs and Hearts
1♦	♣	♠	3♣	3♣ shows that the two long suits are the top and bottom ranking of those not bid so far.
1♦	♥	♠	2♦	Shows both majors.
1♥	♣	♦	2NT	Showing Diamonds and Hearts
1♥	♣	♠	3♣	3♣ shows that the two long suits are the top and bottom ranking of unbid.
1♥	♦	♠	2♥	Showing Spades and Diamonds .
1♠	♣	♦	2NT	Showing Clubs and Diamonds
1♠	♣	♥	3♣	3♣ shows that the two long suits are the top and bottom ranking of unbid.
1♠	♦	♥	2♠	Showing Hearts and Diamonds .



There's a small problem with Ghestem, and a big one.

Ghestem uses the bid $3\clubsuit$ to show two long suits of the lowest and highest ranking unbid so far. This sacrifices $3\clubsuit$ (as well as $2\clubsuit$ over $1\clubsuit$) from your natural overcalling bids.

That contributes to the bigger problem.

Players using Ghestem tend to forget that the $3\clubsuit$ bid is now unnatural. They sometimes use it meaning it to be natural, partner alerts, and a world of mis-bidding/misinformation arises.

Alternatively, one player bids it correctly and the other fails to alert, or interpret, it correctly and we are back in an awkward situation. I've been in senior tournaments where half the calls for the TD were Ghestem mistakes.

So, adopt it if your memory and your partner's memory for such things is particularly good!

Otherwise it is worth being aware of it. If opponents alert an overcall, ask what it means, and if they name Ghestem or any other convention, just ask what suits it is showing.