

Responding in No Trumps to partner's overcall.

When partner opens a suit at the one level then he usually has 12+ points and No Trump responses are generally defined as 1NT (6-10), 2NT (11-12), 3NT (13-15).

But when partner makes a 1-level overcall things are different. Partner has a 5 card suit but may have as few as 7 points, so you need more points to respond in No Trumps (and also a good stopper(s) in the suit that LHO opened).

No Trump responses to a 1-level overcall are as follows: -

1NT = 10-12
2NT = 13-14
3NT = 15+

Hand A	Hand B	Hand C	Hand D
♠ 32	♠ 32	♠ J2	♠ J
♥ Q95	♥ Q95	♥ Q95	♥ Q952
♦ KJ54	♦ KJ54	♦ AQ54	♦ AQ54
♣ J542	♣ KQ54	♣ KJ54	♣ Q1054

Consider the four hands above, and the action you would take if:

- (a) Partner opened 1♠ (assume that 2NT is natural and not Jacoby 2NT), or
(b) LHO opened 1♦ and partner overcalls 1♠.

Hand A: (a) 1NT, this is a 'courtesy' bid – you are obliged to bid with 6+ points.
(b) Pass. You are under no obligation to bid over a simple overcall.

Hand B: (a) 2NT, 11-12 points.
(b) 1NT. Partner may have as few as 7 points and so 2NT would be too high.

Hand C: (a) 3NT, 13-15 points
(b) 2NT, 13-14 points

Hand D: (a) 2♣, you do not bid 2NT as that would deny a 4 card ♥ suit. You plan to bid 2NT (11-12) next go unless partner bids ♥'s in which case you raise.
(b) 1NT, 10-12 with quite possibly a 4 card ♥ suit. Note that you cannot use the same ploy of bidding a minor suit as that is non-forcing opposite an overcall and a 2♣ bid may get you too high anyway.

Note that if partner's overcall is at the two level (not a weak jump) then he presumably has close to opening values and the No Trump responses are approximately :-

2NT = 11-13
3NT = 14+