

ADVANCED COURSE
Lesson One: The “Unassuming Cue Bid”

An Overcall **ALWAYS** shows a good 5+ card suit but have you ever wondered how many points partner has when they support your overcall with 3+ cards?

At this moment in time, it could be any strength, 0 to 17 points (with 18 points one would support straight to game). But not any more.....there is a way of distinguishing between a weak supporting hand (0 – 9 points) or a strong supporting hand (10 + points). Let us look at weak supporting hands first with 0 – 9 points:

Bid to the “LEVEL OF THE FIT” (0 – 9 points) (see also Improver Course, Lesson 5)

“Add the number of cards you have got to the 5 cards that partner has shown for their overcall. Then bid to that level of tricks”. Partner has overcalled 1♠:

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| ♠ K43 | ♠ J872 | ♠ A9753 |
| ♥ 87 | ♥ 10832 | ♥ 83 |
| ♦ AJ862 | ♦ 7652 | ♦ J1072 |
| ♣ 972 | ♣ 2 | ♣ 72 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bid 2♠ (8 cards = 8 tricks) | Bid 3♠ (9 cards = 9 tricks) | Bid 4♠! (10 cards = 10 tricks) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

This really does work for two reasons:

- 1 It takes away so much bidding space from the opponents and often means they will miss out on their game or part score.
- 2 Even if you go one or two down, this will be a good “spoil” against the opponent’s making contract. Also if you bid with confidence, the opponents will rarely double.

The Unassuming Cue Bid (U.C.B - 10+ points)

If you have 3+ card support for partner’s overcall and 10+ points, bid the opener’s first suit.

This is a “Conventional Bid” (like Stayman) and should be announced at the table by the partner of the UCB bidder, so the opponents know what is going on. Also, like any convention, it should be agreed at the start of the game, otherwise accidents may happen!

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|------|------|--------|---------|------|
| N | E | S | W | N | E | S | W |
| 1♣ | 1♠ | Pass | ? | 1♦ | 1♥ | 1♠ | ? |
| ♠ K107 | ♥ 9742 | ♦ AQJ2 | ♣ 85 | ♠ 98 | ♥ AJ72 | ♦ K5432 | ♣ A3 |

Bid 2♣, showing a good raise in partner’s spades: 3+ cards and 10 + points

Bid 2♦, showing a good raise in partner’s hearts: 3+ cards and 10+ points

What happens next after a U.C.B?

We have overcalled and partner has bid the opener's suit (UCB) to tell us they have a good supporting hand. How does the overcaller proceed? Firstly, NEVER pass as partner's bid is artificial and they may not have any of the suit in their hand! The original Overcaller can use the Losing Trick Count to determine their level of response:

- 1 With a WEAK overcall (8 or 9 Losing Tricks), just repeat your suit at the lowest level:

| N | E | S | W | West | East |
|------|----|------|------|--------|----------|
| 1♣ | 1♥ | Pass | 2♣* | ♠ 9743 | ♠ 82 |
| Pass | 2♥ | Pass | Pass | ♥ K98 | ♥ AQ1072 |
| Pass | | | | ♦ AQJ3 | ♦ 84 |
| | | | *UCB | ♣ Q7 | ♣ 8642 |

- 2 With a MEDIUM overcall (7 Losing Tricks), jump a level, as you **ALWAYS assume 8 Losing Tricks for partner's UCB:**

| N | E | S | W | West | East |
|------|----|------|------|--------|----------|
| 1♣ | 1♥ | Pass | 2♣* | ♠ 7643 | ♠ 92 |
| Pass | 3♥ | Pass | 4♥ | ♥ K853 | ♥ AQ1092 |
| Pass | | | | ♦ AQJ3 | ♦ 94 |
| | | | *UCB | ♣ 2 | ♣ A865 |

East's bid of 3♥ showed a medium overcall with 7 LTs. West can then push onto game with 7 LTs (one less losing trick than the expected 8). 4♥ will be an easy make.

- 3 With a STRONG overcall (6 Losing Tricks or less), East bids straight to game knowing that partner has 8 Losing Tricks (10+ points) for their UCB:

| N | E | S | W | West | East |
|------|----|------|------|---------|----------|
| 1♣ | 1♥ | Pass | 2♣* | ♠ J8753 | ♠ K10 |
| Pass | 4♥ | Pass | Pass | ♥ K973 | ♥ AQJ104 |
| Pass | | | | ♦ AQ | ♦ 92 |
| | | | *UCB | ♣ 104 | ♣ A763 |

APPENDIX

Remember that the UCB is **ONLY** for the overcalling side (we shall look at what a bid of the opponent's suit means for the opening side at a later date, unless you know already!).

If you forget about Losing Tricks, as rough guide line, after partner has made a UCB, repeat your suit when weak and go to game when strong (14+ points to go with the UCB's 10+ points).