



Adventures in Bridge

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This Week in Bridge

(429) Is It Forcing by Advancer?

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Level: 6 of 10 (2 of 6)

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General

When partner makes an overcall, we need to have good agreements about the meaning of Advancer's bids. We need to know both the length and the strength shown by each of the possible bids by Advancer. In addition, and often even more importantly, we need to have good agreements about which bids are forcing and which bids are not. Here we look at Advancer's actions in competitive auctions and make sure that we have a good collection of agreements.

Advancing Partner's 1-Level Overcall

When partner makes a 1-level overcall their values are extremely wide ranging – about 7-18 HCP. This makes it extremely difficult for Advancer to know how high to drive the auction. One of the most important agreements we have in these auctions is whether a new suit is forcing or non-forcing.

New Suit Forcing

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.

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.

New Suit Non-Forcing – Constructive

Some partnerships choose to bid a new suit as non-forcing but showing constructive values (NFC). In this case, a new suit is limited in values and non-forcing, showing about 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♣ 1♠ P 2♥

Playing NFC, this 2♥ bid shows 8-13 points and at least a 5+card suit. Playing new suit forcing, this 2♥ bid shows 10+ points and 5+♥, forcing for 1-round.

Let's assume for the moment we are playing new suit forcing, but make sure we and partner have an agreement.



Advancing Partner's 2-Level Overcall

When partner makes a 2-level overcall they have a stronger hand – opening values and a good suit. That means that Advancer can explore for a fit by bidding a new suit with fewer HCP. Traditionally, a new suit after 2-level overcall shows a 5+card suit and 8+ points. It is forcing for 1-round!

Advancer's Bids in Competition

When partner makes a simple overcall and there is further competition from Responder then we take a similar approach for Advancer's freebids as we do as Responder in freebid auctions. We have positive (value showing and forcing) bids and negative (competitive and non-forcing) bids.

General Rules

If Responder bids a suit, we use positive freebids:

- New Suit Forcing
- Competitive Double

If Responder makes a negative double or bids NT, we use negative freebids:

- 2-Level New Suit Competitive (Non-Forcing)
- 1-Level New Suit Forcing
- Strong Double – 10+ pts
- Strong Redouble – 10+ pts

Example 2

1♣ 1♠ 2♣ 2♦

This 2♦ bid is a positive freebid, forcing for 1-round and showing 5+♦ and 10+ points.

Example 3

1♦ 1♠ 1NT 2♥

Since a double of 1NT would show values, then a 2♥ bid is non-forcing and competitive. This 2♥ bid shows a 5+card ♥ suit and about 5-9 points.

Example 4

1♣ 1♥ X 2♦

Since a redouble would show values, then a 2♦ bid is non-forcing and competitive. This 2♦ bid shows a 5+card ♦ suit and about 5-9 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. It is important for you and partner to have a good agreement about which bids are forcing and which bids are non-forcing. You should discuss with partner auctions where Responder stays quiet, as well as make sure you have discussed auctions where all four players bid. Competitive bidding is hard - make sure that you are prepared for these situations.