

JUMP OVERCALLS

NG34Bridge

How do you like your jump overcalls, weak, intermediate or strong?

East opens 1♥ and you have one of these hands. Let's assume you are going to bid spades with all of them. Let's assume you will bid spades with all of them. With which hands will you bid 2♠ rather than 1♠?

South 1	South 2	South 3	South 4	South 5
♠AKQ765	♠KJ1076	♠AQ10965	♠QJ976	♠KQJ1092
♥3	♥3	♥3	♥32	♥6
♦Q32	♦KJ2	♦732	♦QJ2	♦542
♣AK5	♣AK52	♣AK5	♣A92	♣982
18 HCP	15 HCP	13 HCP	10 HCP	6 HCP

As opener or responder we have a good framework for showing our strength and shape to within fairly tight limits, but when overcalling you only have two bids (1♠ and 2♠) to cover the whole range from South 1 to South 5. Not very helpful to your partner, is it?

Have you discussed with your partner what you are showing when you make a jump overcall to 2♠. There are three universally recognised methods, strong, intermediate and weak jump overcalls.

Back in the 1950's, it was standard to play strong jump overcalls so bid 2♠ with South 1, and 1♠ with all the others.

By the 1980's it was recognised that hands like South 1 came up so infrequently that [intermediate jump overcalls](#) became the norm, so you would jump to 2♠ with South 2, and bid 1♠ with Souths 3-5. With South 1 overcaller makes a takeout double and then bid spades ("double, then bid").

By the beginning of the 21st Century and the growing popularity of aggressive spoiling tactics (Weak 2's, bidding to the level of the fit etc.), [weak jump overcalls](#) became the norm at tournament level, and are now commonly played at intermediate level. so with South 5's hand (a hand suitable for a weak 2 opening bid) you would jump to 2♠. With South 3 you would bid 1♠, prepared to rebid your spades.

Although strong jump overcalls have all but disappeared from serious competitive bridge events, they still occasionally appear at local club level in the UK. Intermediate jump overcalls are still prevalent, but are likely to be soon overtaken in popularity by weak jump overcalls.

So, when your partner makes a jump overcall and you are asked what the bid shows, please don't say 'natural'!! The opponent knows you are showing your bid suit, but wants to know whether you play weak, intermediate or strong jump overcalls. If you play at a competitive event you will be expected to show this in your convention card. If you have a regular partner and have an agreement, just say "weak", "intermediate" or "strong" as appropriate. If you have not discussed / agreed your system with your partner, just say so.