Beginners' Lesson 7: Overcalls & scoring

Board 1
North Deals None Vul
West North East South
Pass 1 Pass 1
All pass

3 NT
Lead: 10

East has a perfect 1 NT overcall (16-18 HCP and a good stop in the opponent's suit). West only needs 10 HCP to bid game.

The 10 lead is the top of partner's suit.

Declarer plays a club, so they can then play a heart towards the AQ. They play the Q (a finesse), then Ace and another heart.

Board 2
East Deals N-S Vul
West North East South
Pass 1 Pass 1 NT Pass
All pass

South has shown a strong balanced hand of 16-18. North does not have the strength for game and makes a weakness takeout of 2 ♠.

Lead is 2 ♠

Declarer wins with the Q ♠, and draws trumps then plays on diamonds.

Board 3
South Deals E-W Vul
West North East South
Pass 1 Pass 1 NT Pass
All pass

East's overcall shows 16-18 HCP. West is not interested in game with 5 HCP. Notrumps is not a good option, so West makes the weak bid of 2 ♠.

East must pass.

Lead is A ♠. After seeing dummy, North should switch to the K ♠.

Board 4
West Deals None Vul
West North East South
Pass 1 Pass 1 NT Pass
All pass

Despite both opponents bidding, South is strong enough to overcall 2 ♠.

Lead is J ♠

Declarer wins and plays a diamond towards dummy. When they get back in, they should return to dummy with a diamond and run the J ♠ hoping to capture the K ♠ (finesse).

Board 5
North Deals N-S Vul
West North East South
Pass 1 Pass 1 NT Pass
All pass

North opens their longest suit and then raises in partner's spades. EW should compete in hearts. South has great shape and should bid game once the spade fit is known.

Lead is A ♠ - partner's suit.

Board 6
East Deals E-W Vul
West North East South
Pass 1 Pass 1 NT Pass
All pass

North overcalls 2 ♠ and South, with an opening hand and good support, bids to game.

Lead is 4 ♠

Declarer wins then takes the heart finesse which loses. Once back in, draw the last trump and play on diamonds. A first and then low towards the Q ♠.

Board 7
South Deals Both Vul
West North East South
Pass 1 Pass 1 NT Pass
All pass

NS bid to their 4 ♠ game.

Lead is K ♠

Now play the board again in 4 ♠ by West to illustrate the power of big fits with few points.

North leads K ♠ (top of a sequence) or 6 ♠ (partner's suit)

Board 8
West Deals None Vul
West North East South
Pass 1 Pass 1 NT Pass
All pass

West, with a good trump fit, bids 2 ♠ (6-9 HCP). Both pairs may compete to the 3-level.

Lead is K ♠ against diamonds and 2 ♠ against spades. Again it is worth playing the hand twice. 3 ♠ or 3 ♠.

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