RESPONDING TO AN OVERCALL WITH SUPPORT

The first thing to remember when responding to an overcall is that you are NOT responding to an opening bid. Partner might have only 8 points. If you respond 1NT with a 6 count and partner has overcalled on an 8 count, you have 14 of the 40 points in the pack and your opponents with 26 points are likely to double and massacre your contract.

RESPONDING WITH SUPPORT:

Raise to 2 of partner's suit eg

(1♦) 1♥ (P) 2♥

6-9 (10) pts with 3+ support.

Raise to 3 of partner's suit eg

(1♦) 1♥ (P) 3♥

You have a **CHOICE** of how you play this:

1. 6-9 (10) pts with 4+ support OR
2. 0-5 pts with 4+ support (with care when vul, particularly vul vs non-vul)

Either way the bids are based on the Law of Total Tricks – the idea that if you have a 9 card trump fit it is usually safe and effective to compete to the 3 level. I personally prefer method 2 for 2 reasons:

(a) It's more aggressive and
(b) The overcaller's hand, with distribution, might have improved to 16 or more points. With method 1, you no longer have room for an invitation bid.

Many very strong players however prefer method 1 as they feel it is more important to learn about the extra trump than the point range (points, schmoints) and that as a consequence light games can be found.

Raise to 4 of partner's suit eg

(1♦) 1♥ (P) 4♥

0-5 pts with 5+ support and a singleton or void.

Cue of the opener's suit eg:

(1♦) 1♥ (P) 2♦

11+pts with 3+ support.

This is the **UNASSUMING CUEBID**.

It solves a number of problems. The regular problem I see is where responder jumps to 3 of the overcaller's suit, meaning it as a strong bid eg

(1♦) 1♥ (P) 3♥

The overcaller now passes with their 8 count and the contract goes one or more off. The unassuming cuebid allows you to keep the bidding lower.

Responding to the unassuming cuebid:

Overcaller repeats their suit at the 2 level:

(1♦) 1♥ (P) 2♦
(P)   2♥

This shows 8-11 points and allows responder to drop the bid at the 2 level.

Overcaller jump rebid their suit, bids another suit, bids NTs eg:

(1♦) 1♥ (P) 2♦
(P)   3♥

This shows 12-13 points (ie an opening hand) but not enough to force to game opposite 11 points

Overcaller bids game eg

(1♦) 1♥ (P) 2♦
(P)   4♥

14+ points and the overcaller knows there is enough for game.