

19) 2 suited overcall on opponents opening of strong 1♣ or strong 1♦

There are quite a few bidding systems based on strong 1♣ opening. We go from Neapolitan♣, Roman♣, Blue Team♣, Precision♣, Polish♣, Viking♣, till the Two Suited♣, the last born in the glorious family.

In all of these bidding systems, popular on both sides of the Atlantic, the only strong opening bid is 1♣ showing any shape and generally 16+ HCP.

We are talking about artificial systems where a 1 in a suit overcall over 1♣ opening, only represents a small nuisance and can often make life easier for the opener partner.

The 1 in a suit overcall is therefore not advisable because over caller runs some risk without having in return any benefit.

The 2 in a suit overcall is instead quite effective for it takes away more bidding space and causes sizable difficulties to the opponents.

Bidding systems based on strong 1♦ opening, are normally played only in Italy and have a bidding technique somehow similar to that of their more popular cousins.

Also in the case of a system based on strong 1♦ opening, the winning overcall is the one at 2 level for the same reasons seen over 1♣ opening.

Problems related to overcalling a strong 1♣ opening, are somehow similar to the ones seen when overcalling a strong 1NT opening.

In order to overcall we cannot wait to have a strong hand because opener is known to have at least 16+ HCP and very seldom, we could have a good portion of the maximum 24 HCP left.

Overcalls on 1♣ or 1♦ have to be based on shape, not on strength.

One treatment that works well is the DONT R&N:

W N E S

1♣ 2♣ = minimum 5-4 in minors

2♦ = minimum 5-4 in majors

2♥ = 5+♥ with unknown 4+ minor on the side, or 6+♥ .

2♠ = 5+♠ with unknown 4+ minor on the side, or 6+♠

The X overcall showing any 6+ carder is not advisable because the X pre-emptive value is nil and has the only result of making life easier for

opener partner.

As far as the HCP required for the overcall are concerned, we have to take into account that normally the defending side could, at most, have roughly 20 HCP, so it is useless to talk about an upper HCP limit. The overcall has therefore a destructive more than a constructive connotation.

The lower HCP limit would depend, as usual, on shape and on vulnerability.

We have to think in terms of minimum 7-8 HCP obviously concentrated in the suits. In case of violent shapes, like 6-5, we could even overcall with a 5 HCP, and we can be sure that we will not be punished for our daring bid. Over-caller partner should not take any risk but simply make a choice between the 2 suits, avoiding any inviting bid that, most of the times, would make no sense.