



# MARTY BERGEN'S

## SECRETS TO WINNING BRIDGE

Number 9

### After Your Opponent Opens

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## 2-Level Overcalls

Marty Sez: **Even if you're nonvul, don't overcall at the 2 level with a weak 5-card suit.** Why is that?

☑ It's not easy for others to bid at the two level. If you buy the contract and partner has a singleton – yuck.

☑ Partner will be eager to raise you with 3 trumps. Being at the 3+ level with an 8-card fit is not great.

Your RHO opens 1♠. Neither side is vulnerable.

1. ♠ J 3 ♥ A 10 2 ♦ A 10 5 ♣ A J 7 5 3

Double. Let partner decide what suit to play in.

2. ♠ Q J 8 4 ♥ K J ♦ Q 6 5 4 2 ♣ K J

Pass. You have a terrible suit and an ugly hand.

If your friends tell you, "All you need for a 2-level overcall is 5 and 10," they are definitely confused.

3. ♠ A J 10 ♥ K J 8 5 4 ♦ A Q ♣ 9 8 6

Bid 1NT. Safer than 2♥ and a lot more descriptive.

4. ♠ 6 5 ♥ A Q 10 8 4 ♦ K Q 9 8 ♣ 9 5

Bid 2♥. **Having all your strength in your two longest suits is a big plus.** 2-level overcalls on a 5-card suit should include a quality suit (3+ honors). Even then, avoid this bid unless you are nonvul and have good distribution and a promising hand.

5. ♠ 4 ♥ A 2 ♦ 10 9 8 6 5 3 ♣ A Q 8 6

Bid 2♦. Yes, I'd like a better suit. I'd also like a bigger house. So what! I love 6-4 hands.

Also worth knowing about 2-level overcalls:

A. When your RHO opens 1♦, a 2♣ overcall may not seem like a big deal. Because the opponents' search for a major must then begin at the two level, overcalling 2♣ over 1♦ can be *very* effective.

B. -200 is a terrible result at matchpoints. It's no big deal at IMPs. So, be reluctant to make a borderline vulnerable 2-level overcall at matchpoints.