

Competitive Bidding When the Opponents Overcall the Precision 1♣ Opening Bid

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This is our fifth article on the Precision Club Bidding System. In this article, we will discuss some suggestions for bidding after your partner opens the Precision 1♣ and your right hand opponent (RHO) intervenes with a bid.

The Original “Simplified” Precision Competitive Tools

For the first part of this discussion, assume that your *RHO intervenes with a suit bid* at the one-level (1♦, 1♥, or 1♠) or with 2♣. What would you do?

With at Least 9 HCP:

In the original simplified version of the Precision Club that we played, there were two bids you could make to alert your partner that you had at least 9 high card points (HCP) after RHO intervened. With an unbalanced hand (i.e., at least one 5-card suit) and at least 9 HCP, the recommended bid was to bid the cheapest NT. For example, if RHO overcalled with a 1♥ bid, you would bid 1NT. If the overcall were made at the two-level, you would bid 2NT. The NT bid implied that you had a stopper in the overcaller's suit; but, this was not always the case.

With a balanced hand (i.e., no 5-card suit of your own and no singletons or voids) and at least 9 HCP, you were supposed to cue-bid the suit in which RHO overcalled. E.g., if RHO bid 1♠ over partner's opening 1♣ bid, you would bid 2♠. If RHO bid 2♠, you would bid 3♠. And, so on.¹

With Less than 9 HCP:

If RHO intervened and you had less than 9HCP, you would choose from the following bids:

1. With an unbalanced hand and 5-8 HCP, bid your long suit unless it is the same as the one in which RHO overcalled (more on this later). With length in the RHO's bid suit, you might want to consider passing (note: if the bidding is passed to your partner, she must reopen the bidding with a double – see footnote 1, below, and number 3 on the next page). Alternatively, you could choose to make bid number 2, discussed next.
2. With a balanced hand and 5-8 HCP, you would double the RHO's bid – your partner now knows about both your distribution and point count. This is considered a takeout

¹ It is important to understand that if you pass the RHO bid, partner is *required* to reopen the bidding with a double if your left-hand opponent has not also entered the bidding. Note that if you have 9+ HCP and length in RHO's suit (assuming that you know what the RHO's bid means about her distribution), you could pass the RHO's bid knowing that partner will double the bid. This “trap-pass” is designed to penalize opponents who like to try and mess with your Precision bidding.

double and your partner has the option to pass or bid further. Normally, the 1♣ opener would not pass this double unless she had length in your RHO's suit and wants to leave in the double to penalize your RHO.

3. With less than 5 HCP, you would usually pass. If your left hand opponent (LHO) also passes, it is up to the opener to reopen the bidding with a double. However, partner should evaluate her hand before making an automatic double. That is, if she has length in the overcaller's suit, she should give consideration to the fact that you might have passed because you have less than 5 HCP and that you are not "trap" passing. (Opener's job is made easier if the bidding goes as follows: 1♣ - 1♠ - pass - 2♠. If opponents' bids are natural, about 95% of the time, opener would be correct in assuming that your pass shows less than 5 HCP and that you do not want a reopening double.) If partner does double RHO's overcall when both you and your LHO have passed, you may need to "pull" the double in order to keep the opponents from making a fat part score at your expense.²

Try the following quiz using the bids presented above. For each hand, assume that your partner has opened 1♣.

<p>QUIZ #1 [<i>bidding when your RHO intervenes</i>]: In the following hands your partner has made a 1♣ opening bid. Assume that your RHO then bid 1♥ (a natural bid showing a heart suit), what bids should you make with the following hands using the methods described above?</p>	
1)	♠ Q 9 5 2 ♥ K J 3 2 ♣ A 10 7 6 3
2)	♠ A 10 8 ♥ Q J 8 6 4 ♦ J 4 ♣ J 10 6
3)	♠ Q J 3 2 ♥ K 8 ♦ J 9 4 ♣ 10 7 6 3
4)	♠ 7 4 3 ♥ 7 2 ♦ A K Q 10 ♣ 10 7 6 5
5)	♠ K 8 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ J 7 5 3 ♣ Q 8 7 3
6)	♠ 7 6 5 ♥ 7 2 ♦ Q 10 ♣ 10 7 6 5 4 2

Next, assume that your RHO *intervenes with a 1NT bid* over partner's 1♣ opening. What do you do?

It is a good idea to always query LHO as to what their partnership understanding is regarding the NT overcall. You should be consistent in asking about their understanding. In other words, don't ask *only* when you have a hand in which you would have given partner a positive response to the 1♣ opening as this would convey unauthorized information to your partner. If you prefer to *not* query about the opponent's partnership understanding and if your

² On the other hand, if partner decides not to double, she could pass, reopen the bidding with some amount of NT, or bid her longest suit. Whether you need to consider any of her reopening bids as forcing and what you do after that, is a matter of partnership agreement. We play all "systems on" after partner reopens with a NT bid – i.e., Stayman, transfers, and so on are used.

opponents have convention cards, you should at least review their convention card before determining your course of action.

Assuming that the overcaller's 1NT bid showed a somewhat standard NT overcall in the 15-18 HCP range, this does not leave you with a lot of points. Even if you have the remaining points in the hand, you probably have a maximum of 9 HCP [the probability of this happening is very low; but, stranger things have happened].

With less than 5 HCP:

More often than not, the probability is that you would have less than 5 HCP in this situation. If this is the case, you should usually pass the 1NT overcall. Note that partner is not required to reopen the bidding with a double as she knows you have less than 5 HCP. There are many things she can do when you have passed the 1NT. For example, a double could be penalty or have another meaning (e.g., takeout) depending upon your partnership agreement. A suit bid at the 2-level by opener should show a long self-supporting suit as she knows you may not have support for her suit.

You and your partner should discuss the types of hands the 1♣ opener could have (e.g., balanced strong NT opener, unbalanced with a weak long suit, unbalanced with a self-supporting long suit, etc.) and determine the best approach to bidding them after the 1NT overcall and pass by you and your LHO. Remember to discuss what the opener should do if your LHO responds to RHO's 1NT overcall.

Occasionally, there may be times when you have a long suit headed by the few points you have in your hand and you might decide to make a 3-level bid in that suit (e.g., a 7-card heart suit headed by a king and jack). Carefully consider whether you should enter the bidding. If you can believe RHO's 1NT bid, you would expect to find 2-4 hearts in that hand. This means partner will have very few, if any, hearts to support you if you make a 3♥ bid. Be sure to consider the vulnerability and opponent's skill level before jumping into the auction at the 3-level.

Note that it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the various conventional treatments you and your partner could utilize to combat the 1NT overcall. For example, you might consider utilizing a convention similar to what you currently use when your RHO opponent opens 1NT. Fully discuss the pros and cons of conventional calls in this situation with partner before implementing them.

With 5-9 HCP:

Occasionally, you will have 5-8 HCP or possibly even 9 HCP when RHO overcalls your partner's 1♣ bid with 1NT. In this case, you have several options. With a balanced 5-9 HCP, you could bid 2 NT. Alternatively, you could double RHO's 1NT with the expectation that you will set that contract. When doubling, you always need to consider the vulnerability, the opponent's skill level, and the possibility that you have a marginal shot at a game contract.

With an unbalanced 5-9 HCP hand, you could bid your longest suit at the two level (e.g, bidding 2♦ would show at least a 5-card diamond suit and 5-9 HCP). Once again, you should consider the vulnerability, the opponent's skill level, and try to decide whether you could use your long suit to set the RHO's 1NT contract.

As stated above, it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the various conventional treatments you and your partner could utilize to combat the 1NT overcall. But, as you and partner are making decisions about your implementation of Precision, you should discuss the possibility of playing some type of convention in this situation.

QUIZ #2 [bidding when your RHO intervenes with 1NT]: In the following hands your partner has made a 1♣ opening bid. Assume that your RHO then bid 1NT – a natural bid showing 15-18 HCP and a balanced hand, what bids should you make with the following hands?

- 1) ♠ J 7 5 4 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ A 10 8 7 6 5
- 2) ♠ 9 8 ♥ Q J 7 4 ♦ 9 8 6 4 ♣ J 10 6
- 3) ♠ 6 5 ♥ K 8 3 2 ♦ J 9 4 ♣ Q 7 6 3
- 4) ♠ 7 4 3 ♥ A Q J 7 2 ♦ 10 6 ♣ 7 6 5
- 5) ♠ 9 8 7 6 ♥ 8 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ Q 8 7 5 3
- 6) ♠ K J 10 9 8 7 4 2 ♥ 9 2 ♣ 8 6 2

Note that when you have more than 9 HCP and RHO has overcalled “1NT,” you can be certain that the NT overcall is not a standard strong NT bid. I suggest that in this situation you use the “new methods” discussed below for combating opponent's overcall of your opening 1♣ bids.

Another possible call that your RHO could make over the opening 1♣ bid is to double. When this happens, the only things that change are (1) your positive response point count and (2) the requirements for a redouble. With the double, you now need 9 HCP for a positive response. You should have 5-8 HCP and a balanced hand for a redouble. [The other responses you ignore the double and make the responses that were covered in the second article of this series.]

It is possible that your RHO will make a jump suit bid showing a long suit (and not necessarily many points). Once again, you should ask your LHO to describe the jump bid's requirements so that you know what it means. There are many conventions for handling jump bids that are intended to disrupt your bidding. I highly recommend that you determine the conventions that would work best for you and your partner. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the available conventions.

In later versions of Precision published by C. C. Wei and Match Point Precision published by C. C. Wei and Ron Anderson the bidding after an overcall of the opening 1♣ by the opponents was much more complex. We initially elected to stay with the simplified version explained above.

Changing Times Call for New Methods

At first, we had some success with the original simplified methods for handling overcalls by the RHO. One problem with the original bidding was exposed with the recommended 1NT bid to show an unbalanced hand with at least 9 HCP after RHO overcalled with 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠, (or 2 NT when RHO overcalled a natural 2♣). Oftentimes, you ended-up playing a NT contract from the “wrong side.”

Too frequently it seemed you would make the NT bid without stoppers in the RHO's bid suit. There were many times when my partner and I couldn't find a fit in a suit contract and wound-up in a NT contract played from the weaker hand instead of the 1♣ opener's strong hand.

When you end up being the declarer in a NT contract, the lead is being made through your partner's strong 1♣ club hand and it may only have partial stoppers (e.g., K and J) in the RHO's suit. And, those stoppers are vulnerable to a finesse made through them. This issue was particularly noticeable in team games where the opponents opened a strong NT with the cards where we opened 1♣ (with the intention of showing the NT distribution in a later bid). Frequently, the NT contract would be makeable where the 1♣ opener was the declarer and would be set when the responder was forced to bid 1NT after RHO's overcall.

We tried switching the bidding with the balanced and unbalanced 9+ HCP hands so that no-trump contracts would more often be played by the opening 1♣ bidder. This worked for a while. Then, some of the better players began devising bidding conventions that countered our simplified methods.

An example of one convention is the *CRASH* system in which the RHO's overcall arsenal included a combination of artificial and real bids to show various types of hands. For example a simple 1♦ overcall might mean that the overcaller has the red suits or, in some systems, the “pointy” suits (diamonds and spades). Another example is when 1NT shows any 2-suited hand with or without opening values. These conventions seemed to proliferate as Precision Club players achieved more and more tournament success.

Eventually, we decided that it was necessary to devise a better method of handling our opponent's overcall of our opening 1♣ bid. To that end, we made some adjustments for bidding when RHO makes an overcall of the 1♣ bid. The details of those adjustments are explained beginning on the next page:

The New Methods

- With unbalanced hands and 9+ HCP, we now make the cheapest suit bid regardless of what RHO bids over our partner's 1♣ opening. For example, if RHO overcalls with a 1♥ bid, you would make an artificial 1♠ bid to describe the fact that your hand is unbalanced and that you have at least 9 HCP (note that you do not promise any length in the bid suit).³ You will try to give your partner more information about your hand's actual distribution later in the bidding. Because your 1♠ bid is an artificial bid (you may not actually have spades), it should be alerted by your partner.
- With balanced hands and 9+ HCP, we make the cheapest NT bid. This bid still implies that we have stoppers in the overcaller's suit(s). If you don't have stopper in the suit(s) that the overcall announced, you may want to “manufacture” a bid. That is, you may want to bid the cheapest suit even though you do not have a 5-card suit as that bid implies.
- With 5-8 HCP and a balanced hand, we still double to show the distribution and point count.
- With 5-8 HCP and an unbalanced hand, we bid our longest suit at the cheapest level unless that bid happens to be the “cheapest suit bid” that we could make. For example after partner's opening 1♣ bid, if RHO bids 1♦, a bid of 1♠, 2♣, 2♦, or 2♥ tells partner you have 5-8 HCP and at least 5 cards in the bid suit. A bid of 1♥, on the other hand, would imply to partner that you have at least 9+ HCP and an unbalanced hand – it states nothing about the heart suit. [With length in the heart suit and 5-8 HCP, it is necessary to bid 2♥ over RHO's 1♦ bid so that partner is informed about your HCP holding.]
- With less than 5 HCP, we still pass RHO's overcall (see item 3, on page 2, above).
- When the opponents double the 1♣ opening bid, we use the same structure described on page 4, above. That is, make a “normal” positive response with 9+ HCP or redouble with 5-8 HCP and a balanced hand.
- We use the above described methods regardless of whether RHO overcalls in a suit or makes a NT bid. Important: be certain that you understand what the RHO's overcall means if the opponents are playing some type of convention against your 1♣ opening bids.

Try the two quizzes shown on the next page using the new methods of competing when your

3 Of course, before making this bid, it pays to ask your LHO what the 1♥ bid means, especially if it is an artificial bid. If the 1♥ bid is an artificial bid showing two suits and one of those is your long suit, you might consider passing and moving into the auction with a double after you know more about where the opponents think they are going in the bidding. [Over the years, we have earned many top boards by letting the opponents get into contracts that we double for penalties – especially those opponents who do not respect the 1♣ opening bid's strength. But, it pays to be aware of vulnerability – try not to let non-vulnerable opponents steal the contract if there is an opportunity for you to make a vulnerable game or slam contract.]

RHO overcalls partner's opening 1♣ bid with (a) an *artificial* bid in quiz #3 and (b) a *natural* bid in quiz #4.

QUIZ #3 [*bidding when your RHO intervenes*]: In the following hands your partner has made a 1♣ opening bid. Assume that your RHO then bid 1♦ (an artificial bid showing the “pointed” suits – diamonds and spades), what bids should you make with the following hands?

- 1) ♠ Q J 9 5 2 ♥ K 3 2 ♦ A 10 7 6 3
- 2) ♠ A 10 8 ♥ Q J 4 ♦ J 8 6 4 ♣ J 10 6
- 3) ♠ Q J ♥ K 8 3 2 ♦ J 9 4 ♣ 10 7 6 3
- 4) ♠ 7 4 3 ♥ 10 7 6 5 ♦ 10 ♣ A K Q 7 2
- 5) ♠ K 8 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ Q 8 7 5 3
- 6) ♠ 10 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ 7 2 ♦ Q 10 ♣ 7 6 5

Try the following quiz using the new method of competing when your RHO overcalls partner's opening 1♣ bid with a *natural* bid.

QUIZ #4 [*bidding when your RHO intervenes*]: In the following hands your partner has made a 1♣ opening bid. Assume that your RHO then bid 1♥ (a natural bid showing hearts), what bids should you make with the following hands?

- 1) ♠ K 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ 7 2 ♦ J ♣ Q 6 5 3
- 2) ♠ A Q J 10 8 ♥ 4 ♦ J 8 6 4 ♣ J 10 6
- 3) ♠ Q J ♥ Q 8 3 2 ♦ Q 9 4 ♣ 10 7 6 3
- 4) ♠ J 7 4 3 ♥ A Q J 7 2 ♣ 10 7 6 5
- 5) ♠ Q 9 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ J 8 7 5 3
- 6) ♠ Q J 9 5 2 ♥ K 3 2 ♦ A 10 7 6 3

The suggested answers to the quizzes that appeared in this article begin on the next page.

Answers to Quiz #1: In this quiz, you were to use the original simplified methods to combat your RHO's 1♥ overcall of partner's opening 1♣ bid. We are assuming that the overcall is natural and shows a heart suit.

1) ♠ Q 9 5 2 ♥ K J 3 2 ♣ A 10 7 6 3

Using the original simplified methods with this hand, you would have bid 1NT to show an unbalanced hand with at least 9 HCP [you could land in hot water if you wind-up being the declarer in a NT contract]. Note that you could consider making a “trap” pass expecting that partner will reopen the bidding with a double if your LHO also passes. However, look carefully at the vulnerability – a one or two trick set of a non-vulnerable contract will not gain as many points as either a vulnerable or non-vulnerable game made by your side.

Against a doubled heart contract, assuming that RHO has the A and Q of hearts, you could expect to win two and possibly three tricks (if you get to ruff a diamond) with your hearts and potentially the A of clubs. That means you need three or four tricks from partner in order to set the contract. [A word of warning, one bridge truism I learned a long time ago is that when your hand is distributional, there is a high probability that you will find the opponents also have distributional hands.]

2) ♠ A 10 8 ♥ Q J 8 6 4 ♦ J 4 ♣ J 10 6

This hand is also unbalanced with at least 9 HCP. The difference between this hand and the previous one is that your length is in RHO's bid suit. With equal or favorable vulnerability (i.e., opponents are vulnerable and you are not), I would probably pass expecting partner to reopen with a double if your LHO opponent also passes the 1♥ bid. Potentially, you have four tricks in your hand if RHO plays in a doubled contract.

However, if your side is vulnerable and the opponents are not, the possibility of making a vulnerable game outweighs the potential score you might earn for setting the opponents by letting them play in a doubled heart contract. Should this be the case, consider making the 1NT call instead of passing.

3) ♠ Q J 3 2 ♥ K 8 ♦ J 9 4 ♣ 10 7 6 3

Double the 1♥ to show partner that you have a balanced hand with 5-8 HCP.

4) ♠ 7 4 3 ♥ 7 2 ♦ A K Q 10 ♣ 10 7 6 5

Using the original simplified methods of handling RHO's interfering bid, your choice is to either cue bid 2♥ or bid 1NT because you meet the 9 HCP threshold for a positive response. But, you do not have a stopper in hearts nor do you have a suit with at least 5 cards. I would have considered making a cue bid because the hand is missing a heart stopper.

5) ♠ K 8 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ J 7 5 3 ♣ Q 8 7 3

With this hand you have a slight problem. You are in the 5-8 HCP range which means you should either double to show a balanced hand or bid your long suit to show an unbalanced hand. The singleton in hearts means that you do not really have a balanced hand. But, you are stuck with three 4-card suits, none of which are really exciting to bid. My choice would be to bid 1♠ with the hand. At worst you might wind-up playing in a 4-3 spade fit or there is the possibility that partner will respond with a NT call (1 or more) showing stoppers in hearts and

NT distribution. (Note: partner's 1NT rebid would show 16-18 HCP while a 2 NT rebid would show 19-21 HCP. It is unlikely that partner would call 3 NT which would show 24-26 HCP.)

6) ♠ 7 6 5 ♥ 7 2 ♦ Q 10 ♣ 10 7 6 5 4 2

Normally, with this hand, you would pass. Then, if partner reopens with a double, you would want to bid 2♣ to show you were not making a “trap” pass of RHO's 1♥ overcall.

Answers to Quiz #2: In this quiz, you were to use the original simplified methods to combat your RHO's 1NT overcall of partner's 1♣ bid. We are assuming that the overcall shows a strong opening NT with 15-18 HCP and a balanced hand.

1) ♠ J 7 5 4 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ A 10 8 7 6 5

This unbalanced hand, with 7 HCP, is in the 5-8 HCP where you would normally make a 2♦ bid to describe your hand to partner.

2) ♠ 9 8 ♥ Q J 7 4 ♦ 9 8 6 4 ♣ J 10 6

This balanced hand does not meet the 5-8 HCP requirement that would allow you to bid – pass and see what partner does if the 1NT is passed to her.

3) ♠ 6 5 ♥ K 8 3 2 ♦ J 9 4 ♣ Q 7 6 3

This time, your balanced hand has 6 HCP – double to describe the hand to your partner.

4) ♠ 7 4 3 ♥ A Q J 7 2 ♦ 10 6 ♣ 7 6 5

With this somewhat unbalanced hand in the 5-8 HCP range, bid your good hearts. You may not wind-up playing a heart contract; but, it gives your partner some good information about your hand.

5) ♠ 9 8 7 6 ♥ 8 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ Q 8 7 5 3

In this hand, you have only 3HCP – pass.

6) ♠ K J 10 9 8 7 4 2 ♥ 9 2 ♣ 8 6 2

Here is an unusual hand. You have less than the necessary 5-8 HCP range for a 2♠ bid. But, you have eight spades headed by your grand total of 4 HCP – bid 3♠. After considering the vulnerability and skill level of your opponents, if you are daring, you could bid 4♠. But, don't expect much support for your suit from partner. (Occasionally, if you are lucky, she will have the two missing honors – for some players, “hope springs eternal.”)

Answers to Quiz #3: In this quiz, you were to use the new methods (described on page 6) to combat your RHO's artificial 1♦ overcall of partner's opening 1♣ bid. The overcall shows the “pointed” suits – diamonds and spades.

1) ♠ Q J 9 5 2 ♥ K 3 2 ♦ A 10 7 6 3

Here you have 10 HCP and two biddable suits; but, those suits are the same ones held by RHO – if you can believe her bid. Your best course of action is to pass the 1♦ overcall and see what develops. If your LHO opponent passes, opener must reopen with a double. Of

course, you should consider the vulnerability and skill level of the opponents before making an automatic pass. With your 10 HCP partner's 16+ HCP, you are in the game range if you can find the correct contract.

2) ♠ A 10 8 ♥ Q J 4 ♦ J 8 6 4 ♣ J 10 6

In this hand, you meet the 9 HCP requirements for a positive response. You have a balanced hand and potential stoppers in both the spade and diamond suits – bid 1NT.

3) ♠ Q J ♥ K 8 3 2 ♦ J 9 4 ♣ 10 7 6 3

With this balanced 7 HCP hand, you meet the requirements for a double to describe the hand to partner.

4) ♠ 7 4 3 ♥ 10 7 6 5 ♦ 10 ♣ A K Q 7 2

This time, you have the minimum 9 HCP and an unbalanced hand – bid the cheapest suit bid of 1♥. Your partner will understand the heart call does not mean that you necessarily have 5+ hearts. Your hope is that later in the auction you will be able to show your clubs to partner. And, if partner bids hearts, you will be happy to show your support for that suit.

5) ♠ K 8 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ Q 8 7 5 3

This unbalanced hand contains only 6 HCP and does not qualify for a positive response. But, it is unbalanced and you should bid your 5-card club suit – 2♣. This alerts your partner to the situation. [Note that if your long suit were diamonds instead of clubs, you might consider passing given that RHO has announced holding spades and diamonds. If hearts happen to be your long suit, you would need to bid 2♥ to describe the hand – 1♥ would tell partner you had 9+ HCP instead of less than 9 HCP.]

6) ♠ 10 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ 7 2 ♦ Q 10 ♣ 7 6 5

Pass RHO's overcall with this hand. You have less than the 5-8 HCP that would allow you to bid your long suit at the 1-level. In addition, your long suit happens to be one of those “pointed” suits allegedly held by RHO.

Answers to Quiz #4: In this quiz, you were to use the new methods (described on page 6) to combat your RHO's natural 1♥ overcall of partner's opening 1♣ bid. The overcall shows a heart suit.

1) ♠ K 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ 7 2 ♦ J ♣ Q 6 5 3

For this hand, you hold an unbalanced hand in the 5-8 HCP range – bid 2♠. Remember the cheapest suit bid, 1♠ in this case, would promise at least 9 HCP.

2) ♠ A Q J 10 8 ♥ 4 ♦ J 8 6 4 ♣ J 10 6

With this hand, bid 1♠. Your bid will tell partner that you have 9+ HCP and an unbalanced hand. Later in the auction, you should be able to tell partner about your spade suit.

3) ♠ Q J ♥ Q 8 3 2 ♦ Q 9 4 ♣ 10 7 6 3

Your balanced 6 HCP hand is the type where you can double the RHO's overcall. This

describes your hand to partner.

4) ♠ J 7 4 3 ♥ A Q J 7 2 ♣ 10 7 6 5

If RHO hadn't overcalled in your heart suit, you would have had a heart bid in response to partner's opening 1♣ bid. This time, you want to make a "trap" pass and force partner to reopen with a double (assuming that your LHO does not make a bid).

5) ♠ Q 9 7 5 ♥ 4 ♦ J 7 3 ♣ J 8 7 5 3

This hand poses somewhat of a problem. You don't have enough HCP to bid 2♣ and your suit is not strong enough for a jump to 3♣. You should pass and partner will need to decide whether to reopen with a double. After that (assuming that partner reopens with a double and RHO passes), you should bid 2♣. This bid will alert partner that you have less than 5HCP, that clubs is your longest suit, and that you did not have a "stack" of hearts with which you were hoping to set RHO. Partner will need to decide what to do next.

6) ♠ Q J 9 5 2 ♥ K 3 2 ♦ A 10 7 6 3

With this hand, you have sufficient HCP to give partner a positive response – bid 1♠. Later in the auction, you may be able to show your diamond suit, heart control, and void in clubs. Depending upon partner's holding, this hand may lead to a slam contract.

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