Improver 2 – Raising partner's overcall – teacher's notes.

Context

This section assumes that partner's lowest-level suit overcall in the immediate overcall position will promise at least a five-card suit at the one-level, and will I general promise a six-card suit if vulnerable at the two-level – ideally also when not vulnerable).

In both cases the hand should contain something approaching opening values, a suit of some quality, and if at all borderline in values or length then it should be a suit which you would want partner to lead in defence.

Level of fit

The basic concept is that of bidding 'to the level of the fit' – e.g. bid to the three-level if you know of a nine-card fit.

Note that in general this is best achieved by an immediate jump to that level, thereby taking away the opponents' bidding space, and frequently forcing them to take a guess.

Note also that this action will by no means always lead to a making contract, but even if going down it is likely to lead to a better score than allowing the opponents to play in a lesser contract.

Vulnerability

In general, you can bid 1 more than the level of the fit when not vulnerable against vulnerable, and beyond the 2-level consider bidding 1 less when vulnerable against not.

Also when both vulnerable consider going carefully with minimal values unless offset by considerable shape.

Stronger than this

The action of bidding to the level of the fit, suitably modified as above, can be made on any hand of 0 to 9 points.

With 10 or more points and at least a 3-card fit for partner you can show your hand with an immediate cue-bid in the opponents' suit (UCB – the unassuming cue-bid), provided that this does not take you too high.

Note that this bid is unlimited. With greater length or greater strength you will have the opportunity to bid again.