

DON'T MULTI-TASK!!

by Barbara Seagram

It is a known fact that some are able to multi-task and some just cannot. We are not going to suggest which gender can and which cannot but we all know!!

BUT at the bridge table, no-one should multi-task! Bridge demands your full attention and focus. Discussing the outfit of the player sitting south at table 7 will distract you and likely will lead to poor results.

Once you settle down to play a game, now it's time to tune out all the surround-sound. Zoom in and focus on the task at hand. Don't let the distractions get in your way or your life will become a series of missed opportunities.

S 10952
H Q42
D QJ
C Q974

S 7
H J1098
D AK1092
C A102

S QJ
H 7653
D 83
C KJ653

S AK8643
H AK
D 7654
C 8

S	W	N	E
1S	Dbf	2S	P
4S			

You are sitting West on this hand and lead the Diamond Ace. Partner follows with the Diamond 8. You continue with the Diamond King and partner now plays the Diamond 3. Since partner has given you a high-low signal, you correctly interpret that she must have a doubleton. Furthermore, she must be able to overruff the dummy.

It is now that you have to be paying even closer attention. When you are giving partner a ruff, you are able to tell her which suit to lead back after she has ruffed. If you lead a LOW card for partner to ruff, it requests the return of the LOWER ranking suit. If you lead a HIGH card for partner to ruff, it begs for the HIGHER ranking of the two remaining suits. (There are only ever two remaining suits as the player who is ruffing is out of one suit and trumps don't count.)

West now returns the Diamond 2. East's ears perk up as she notices the Diamond 2. Declarer ruffs the Diamond in dummy but East overruffs with the Spade Jack. She returns a low Club (West asked for the return of the lower ranking suit). West wins the Club A and returns another Diamond. East is happily able to overruff dummy yet again. Down two!

Note that if West had led back any old Diamond (e.g. the Diamond 10) then East would have returned a Heart. Declarer can now win that with the Heart Ace, draw trumps and pitch her losing Club on the Heart Queen in dummy. Making 4S.

Ahh, the magic of good defense! It should hold great allure for all of you. It's a great feeling when you've beaten a contract. You'll stand taller when you leave that table!

TO OVERCALL OR DOUBLE?

by Barbara Seagram bseagram@uniserve.com

An overcall is a bid made by an opponent when the other side has already opened the bidding. The term probably stems from the fact that the British refer to a bid as a "call" and thus this is an "overcall". (This would seem to be better terminology than the word "overbid" which infers you have bid too much!!)

The requirements to make a simple overcall ("simple" means that there is no jump involved) at the one level are that you have at least 8 points and a five card suit. The range of points for making an overcall at the one level should be approximately 8-17 points (including distribution). The hardest part for a new player to remember is that you must have a five card suit in order to make an overcall. Also, the weaker the hand, the better the suit must be. If you have the lower end of the totem pole as your range (8-12), then your five card suit must be of sterling quality: 2 of the top three honours or 3 of the top 5 honours. NOTE: You are not opening the bidding for your side; there can only ever be ONE opening bidder. (Of course if you are being forced to make an overcall at the 2 level, you should usually have close to an opening bid and a five card or longer suit.)

We are making this overcall for two main reasons:

1. To tell partner what to lead
2. To interfere with the opponents' bidding and make it tougher for them to exchange information. (A well-placed overcall often makes it problematic for the responder to the opening bid to get into the act.)

With 13 or more points, your suit does not have to be as perfect. The rationale is that with more points, you are more likely to end up **playing** the hand. With fewer points, you rate to become a **defender**. Hence, getting your partner off to the best lead for your side becomes of paramount importance. Partners are notorious for not finding the best lead.

Let's say you hold:

S AK873
H 32
D 532
C 532

Your Right hand opponent (RHO) opens 1 D and you overcall 1 S. Partner is required to lead a Spade (if you are defending) and she is on lead. If she doesn't, you can safely assume she does not own a Spade. (Heaven help her if she shows up with one later!) Your side is now off to the best head start. Had you failed to overcall, she may have led a C from K742 into declarer's C AQ, helping declarer to now make her contract.

What less experienced players find troubling is that an overcall shows such a wide range of points: 8-17. They somehow fear that making an overcall will leave partner with the impression that they only have 8 points and they have a burning urge to show 13 or more when they have a full opening bid of their own. It is at moments like this that the overcall and the take out double seem to overlap each other and confusion starts to reign.

A take out double (from now on referred to as the TOD) shows 13 or more points. If we only have 13-17 points (including distribution), we also require adequate trump support (3 or more cards including an honour) for all the unbid suits in order to make a TOD. Armed with all this knowledge, suddenly we are dealt this hand:

S Q76
H AK954
D 42
C A76

RHO opens 1 D and holding this hand, we get obsessed with the need to show an opening bid versus potentially only 8 points. Thus we find ourselves saying "Double". Oops!

The responder to our takeout double is looking at

S 98
H Q83
D 987
C KQ843

Responder to the double bids 2C now. Back to you, the doubler. What you must now keep in mind is that your partner may have bid 2 C looking at

S 98
H Q83
D 987
C 65432

Her bid of 2 C was a forced response to your takeout double. She has bid a new suit at the cheapest possible level showing 0-8 points. **You the doubler may not bid again.** You have already promised her at least 13 points and you have no more than this.

Your side will now languish in 2 C (if your side gets to play the hand). You will likely make an overtrick and get 110 on the score sheet. However the correct bid by the hand holding the 5 card Heart suit should have been 1 H in the first place: an overcall showing 8-17 points. East would have raised to 2 H. You would make 3 for a score of 140 on the score sheet. In the world of duplicate, your 110 (for being in 2 C) placed alongside six happy 140's (for those in 2 H) ends up being a bottom board.

Why couldn't you now have bid 2 H after partner's 2 C response to your TOD? Because to double first and then bid your suit guarantees 18 or more points. This is due to the fact that if you had only 8-17 points and a 5 card major, you would have made a simple overcall in the first place. Thus, if you have

S 87
H AK965
D AK5
C A75

and RHO opens 1C, your correct bid is Double. If partner bids 1S in response to your double, now you can bid 2 H (only). This shows the big overcall (18 + points).

So, when you think you have a choice between a TOD and an overcall, if you have a long major and 8-17 points, bid the major instead. Bidding a major almost always is a top priority. Minors are usually a last ditch resort as they score so poorly.

THINKING BRIDGE
By EDDIE KANTAR

Dir North
Vul: Both

	North	
	S. -	
	H.1093	
	D. AK108762	
	C. 854	
West		East
S. 872		S. AKJ9
H. 62		H. AKQ8
D. J5		D. 94
C. AKQ1032		C. 976
	South	
	S. Q106543	
	H. J754	
	D. Q3	
	C. J	

North	East	South	West
3D	Dbl.	Pass	5C
All Pass			

Opening lead: D Ace

Bidding Commentary: West can do no less than leap to 5C over East's takeout double. A non-forcing response of 4C is just too timid.

Defensive Commentary: South plays the D3 at trick one. The play of the queen (if the jack is not visible in dummy), promises the jack (or a singleton Queen) in **blood!**

Further Defensive Commentary: After South plays the D3 at trick one, it doesn't matter which diamond West plays. South cannot have the 53 or the J3 doubleton and not start a high-low. So what can South have? South must have the singleton 3 or Q3 doubleton. North, longing for a spade ruff, can afford to lead the D10 at trick two, suit preference for spades, knowing South will win the trick. South wins the queen and returns a spade (he'd better!); North ruffs and the hand is defeated one trick.

This is an example of expert card reading by North who knows that South will **not** high-low with queen doubleton unless the jack is in dummy, but will high-low with J3 or 53 doubleton.

When holding a strong 6 card suit and 7-10 HCP in response to a takeout double, jump in your long suit.
