

## ADVANCING AN OVERCALL

You are vulnerable, sitting in the South with this hand:

South  
♠ K109843  
♥ K65  
♦ A2  
♣ A2

Your RHO opens 1♥ and you overcall 1♠. You have 14 HCP and you can add 2 more points for the 6 card spade suit. West passes and your partner advances your overcall to 2♠. East passes and you must make a decision.

Your partner's raise improves your hand. Marty Bergen's point count system would have you add 1 more point for the 6<sup>th</sup> spade and another 1 point for the two doubletons. He adds 1 additional point for the two aces and ten spot; cards that are undervalued in the standard point count system. That brings this hand up to 19 points. On top of all that, your ♥K is well placed over the 1♥ opener. Kings are very hard to evaluate. We give them 3 points but if the the ace is sitting over it, they are worth nothing. Here, the probability is that East holds the ♥A. Of course, you will jump to game!

West leads the ♥3 and you see this nice dummy:

North  
♠ AJ  
♥ 742  
♦ K9743  
♣ J75

West  
♥ 3

South  
♠ K109843  
♥ K65  
♦ A2  
♣ A2

It seems strange that partner raised you spades with only 2 of them. Normally, it takes 3 cards to raise to the two level, since partner only promises five. North was persuaded to do this rather than bid 1NT with his 9 HCP. He had no heart stopper and his two spades included two honors. If his partner's overcall was weak, he was merely increasing the disruption that his partner was inflicting on East.

The lead of the heart assures you of one heart trick. You count 2 losers in hearts and 1 in clubs. That means you have to bring the spades in without a loss. You could take the spade finesse of the jack, but it's too premature to put all your hopes on this 50% play. Since you have 5 diamonds in the dummy and 7 diamonds in all, there is a good chance that they will break no worse than 4-2 and the 5<sup>th</sup> diamond will give you a spot to park a losing heart.

East wins the first trick with the ♥A and returns a club. Win the ♣A and start right in on the diamonds. You cannot afford to pull trump because you will need the trumps for entries into the dummy. In order to set up a suit, you need entries. Here, you need 3 entries to the dummy.

You play your ♦A and lead up the ♦K. Lead a diamond and trump it with the ♠8. You will find that West started with only 2 diamonds and will over ruff. However, he must use the ♠Q. This is good thing because now the ♠J will be a certain entry. West will lead another heart which you win with your ♥K and go back to the dummy with trump to ruff the 4<sup>th</sup> diamond. This time West must discard and you can get to the dummy again to play the 5<sup>th</sup> diamond, on which you discard your heart.

Here is the entire hand:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">14</div>	<b>N</b> North ♠ AJ ♥ 742 ♦ K9743 ♣ J75	W    N    E    S P    2♣ P    1♥ 1♠ P    P    P    4♠	
	<b>W</b> West ♠ Q52 ♥ J83 ♦ J6 ♣ 98643	<b>E</b> East ♠ 76 ♥ AQ109 ♦ Q1085 ♣ KQ10	
	<b>S</b> South ♠ K109843 ♥ K65 ♦ A2 ♣ A2		
			4♠ S      NS: 0 EW: 0

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/gjpmrwq> . Or, copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the “Next” button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on “Play” you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.