

1.5

COMPETE IN DECLARING « PASS »

(25-06-26)

Declaring *Pass* is a very nice description of your hand!

It's indeed a defensive move at first glance. But be careful! This doesn't mean you should play defensively, that is, declare only when you have "full hands." Moreover, *Passing* in an opening situation with a "bad" 13-point hand is out of the question.

In reality, the "unstated" objective of *Passing* is to increase bidding accuracy in order to determine the optimal contract. It's therefore a very competitive bid that must be handled throughout a bridge game. And, this may surprise many, particularly from the beginning the First bid.

Moreover, as taught from the very beginning of the learning process, *Passing* in an opening situation with a "bad" 13-point hand is out of the question. Here are two very common examples:

Ex. 1.5:1

a)	K J 8 5	b)	K J 8 5
	Q J 6		Q J 6 2
	K J 2		Q J 9 8
	Q J 9 8		K J

You must open the bidding with either *1 Club* or *1 Diamond*, respectively, even though it's possible that this will be the final bid. Declaring *Pass* would be a lack of conviction. Sometimes there won't be a fit with your partner and all the other points will go to your opponents, but you'll generally get away with an average bid. In any case, it's impossible to be certain.

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So, even if it can happen occasionally getting a bad contract by opening according to the "rules," you'll benefit from having a consistent and effective bidding language. Moreover, this type of bad contract more often than not results in an average score.

Here's another typical example where you shouldn't hesitate to open the bidding regardless of the position in which it's necessary to declare.

Ex. 1.5:2

7 6 5 3 2
J 10 6
K J 8
A D

The bidding should be opened at **1 Spade** regardless of the position relative to the dealer. Occasionally, such a contract will be doomed to failure, but refraining from opening the bidding to avoid taking certain risks does not produce good results in the long run.

The ultimate goal in bridge is to regularly exploit the maximum potential of your own team's cards relative to the potential of the opposing team. This means that it may be more profitable to fail a risky contract (because the opponents back out) than to let them succeed. Or, it is not always advantageous to win the auction even if the contract is successful because it **may be more profitable to let the opponents fail**.

It is therefore very important to know **when** and **why** to *Pass*. In more concrete terms, what needs to be developed is an offensive style of play where the *Pass* bid is used as a strategic weapon.

To achieve this pragmatic objective, it is absolutely necessary to draw a precise line that allows for "CONTENT" to be given to the *Pass* bid.

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1.5:1 PRINCIPLE: OPENING WITH A DANGEROUS HAND

It is mandatory to OPEN the auction with a hand containing 13 HL or more, regardless of the card distribution or the player's position.

This principle is simple and precise. However, it only applies to the Opening of the auction.

It is important to realize that there are two possible *Pass* categories for any player exercising their first right to speak. They do not have the same meaning at all.

Identifying each type of *Pass* is so simple and easy that we often do not pay enough attention to it.

There is a "*knowingly*" *Pass* that occurs when the hand does not contain sufficient score while still holding definite potential. This is called a ***narrow disqualification***.

And the other type of first-round *Pass* that many players forget to pay attention to is the "*forced*" *Pass*, which occurs by force of circumstance when the opponent opens the auction first. This *Pass* is quite different because it does not exclude the possibility that the player who must declare a pass against their will may have a hand that could have opened the auction, i.e., one with 13 HL or more. This is called the ***forced (or obliged) disqualification*** of a hand whose score could potentially be very high.

PRINCIPLE 1.5:2 The "Narrow" Disqualification

A narrow disqualification occurs when it is not possible to OPEN or make an OPENING OVERBID (in the first round) and the player holds a hand containing:

- ▶ 10–11 non-losing points and a Specified color fifth;
- or
- ▶ 10–12 points and one or two Specified color fourth.

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PRINCIPLE 1.5:3 "FORCE" DISQUALIFICATION

A hand is forced to disqualify when the opponents have opened the bidding first and it is no longer possible to bid one of the three OPENING OVERBIDS (first round) despite holding a hand whose score would have allowed the bidding to open, i.e., 13 HL or higher.

It can be said that the decision to narrowly disqualify a major hand is relatively simple and generally pleases opponents.

On the other hand, following a premature opening by opponents, choosing to disqualify by force a hand that cannot correspond to any of the three opening overbid categories can upset some partners (and even upset opponents) when holding values exceeding 13 HL.

To justify this move, it is therefore important to know how to effectively "recover" these "silent, disqualified" hands whether at the start of the game or in a defensive .

To learn how to "transform" the Pass bid into an OFFENSIVE TACTIC, you must first understand the specifics of the second-round Opening overbid, the purpose of which is to recover *narrowly disqualified* hands. Subsequently, it will be easier to gain an overview of this overbid in relation to the *second-round takeout double* and the *Cue-Bid of overbid* (which applies to both the first and second rounds) when you have had to forcefully disqualify your hand in the first round.

Here are the main points of the two classes of SECOND-ROUND OPENING OVERBIDS IN COLOR.

1.5.1 DECLARING AFTER “PASS AT THE START OF THE GAME”

The cards are dealt, you are the first player to speak, or, alternatively, no one has opened the bidding before you, and you declare Pass. You have just said:

"I don't have 13 points or a suitable hand to announce a First bid as Opener."

Here is an example of a common declaration, but in two very different contexts.

The first example shows a Passing from the start (or Pass at the start of game) followed by the opening of the bidding by partner. The second example also shows a Passing from the Start, but this time, it is the opponents who opened the bidding after the Passing from the Start.

In both cases, the dealer cannot open the bidding, but in the second round, they can still announce.

Ex. 1.5.1:1	1	2	3	4
a)	Pass 1 Co	Pass ...	1 Tr ...	Pass ...
b)	Pass 1 Co	1 Tr ...	Pass ...	Pass ...

In example a), the context of this situation allows the *1 Heart* bid to have a completely different meaning than an Opening overbid. The dealer (player #1) did not open the bidding, but his partner did. Player #1 therefore became responder, which gives a special meaning to his bid, namely the possession of at least 4 Heart cards and at least 6 points. However, after having Passed immediately (or at the start of the game), it is certain that HIS HAND CANNOT POSSESS MORE THAN 13 POINTS, there is no possible exception.

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In example **b)**, this is very different except for the scoring. The dealer is in a defensive position and is the first on his team to make an ANNOUNCEMENT, that is, a bid other than *Pass*. Thus, the fact that he declared *Pass* at the start of the game does not prevent him from potentially making an Opening overbid to the suit (color) in the second round. It is obvious, however, that this Opening overbid cannot have the same requirements as an Opening overbid to the suit (in the first round and without jumping).

N.B. The terms DECLARATION and BID are considered, for practical purposes, to be *SYNONYMS* and have a broader meaning that includes *Passing*.

On the other hand, an announcement is a bid other than *Pass* and **always** constitutes a description.

The important thing to remember from this basic exercise is the following: **the *Pass* declaration creates new bidding contexts**. This increases the descriptive potential of the dialogue through bidding.

PRINCIPLE 1.5.1:1 THE MEANING OF A BID

The meaning of a bid is determined by the CONTEXT in which it is declared.

This seemingly banal principle is the "cornerstone" of the language of bridge.

There can be multiple contexts in a bidding situation. And the same context can be found in multiple bidding situations; this means that all these bids will necessarily have a common characteristic in addition to their intrinsic meaning.

**PRINCIPLE 1.5.1:2 COMMON DENOMINATOR OF SECOND-TURN OPENING
OVERBIDS AFTER A PASS IN ENTRY OF GAME (AT THE START OF THE GAME)**

The fact of having *Passed* immediately affirms absolutely that the hand's score is less than 13 points, or 12 points with a specified suit at least fifth. This applies to two categories of second-turn Opening overbids: in color and by second-turn takeout Double.

The intrinsic meaning of the Opening suit overbid (in color) after a *Pass in entry of game* (i.e., a second round) is **specific** to this type of declaration, hence the following principle:

PRINCIPLE 1.5.1:3 OPENING SUIT OVERBID AFTER A PASS IN THE ENTRY OF GAME

Any natural suit overbid made in the context of a second-round Opening overbid after a Pass in entry of game asserts possession of:

- a specified color at least fifth, or equivalent,
- 10 or 11 points,
- offensive potential (non-losing points and a singleton).

There is no possible confusion with an Opening suit overbid made in the first round of bidding, since it obviously cannot be preceded by a *Pass* declaration from partner himself. A first-round Opening overbid in color is called Standard because it requires the possession of an "opening hand." This Standard opening hand therefore applies to a **defensive situation** but obviously cannot be defined exactly according to the protocol for the Fifth Major Opening, since a single suit must be chosen for the counterattack.

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But, just like opening bids by offensive team, a defense (*Standard Opening overbid without a jump*) asserts offensive, defensive, or mixed potential. Its requirements, which are detailed in **principles 1.4:3, :4, :5**, have as their main characteristics the possession of:

- a mandatory fifth suit, which can be anonymous or robust depending on the bidding level,
- and
- a score of 13 to 17 points.

It must therefore always be kept in mind that an Opening overbid in the second-round suit after a Pass in entry of game must necessarily be **offensive in nature** due to the low score, that is, it must possess:

- a quality trump with at least one singleton in the other suits, as well as
- almost all non-losing points.

1.5.2 DECLARING AFTER "PASSING ON DEFENSE" (Forced Disqualification)

When a *Pass* is declared after the opponents have opened the bidding, the meaning of an opening Overbid after a "forced" PASS is a little more subtle.

Thus, the defender who declares *Pass* after an opponent's opening and makes an Opening Overbid:

- to the suit (in color),
- with a takeout Double, or
- with a Cue-Bid of Overbid,

may have TWO kinds of interesting hands. Either a hand of **10-11 points well enough constructed** to merit being bid in the second round (a hand that is *narrow disqualified*), or a hand that is *forced disqualified*, i.e., of 13 points or more.

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This point seems trivial, but it is the source of much confusion and misunderstanding.

Let's first consider the Opening overbid in color with a **10-11** point hand. We are pleasantly surprised to see that the two second-round Opening suit overbid contexts (Passing in entry of game and Passing After Opponent's Opening) **specifically** describe this condition.

It is therefore possible to announce clearly a hand with a suit at least specified as a fifth suit and **10-11** points in either case Ssee **Ex. 1.5.1:1 b)** above, and **1.5.2:3** below for context of entry of game and **Ex. 1.5.2:1** and **:2** below when there is a Pass in a defensive situation. There can therefore be no confusion; Both types of Opening suit overbids after a Pass have the **same meaning**.

Let's examine some situations concerning the second context of the first-round pass.

Ex. 1.5.2	1	2	3	4
:1	1 He Pass	Pass 2 Pi	2 He ...	Passe ...
:2	1 Cl 1 NT	Pass 2 Di	1 He ...	Pass ...
:3	Pass 2 Cl	Pass 2 He	1 Cl ...	Pass ...

Here, player #2, in the first two examples, bid a second-round Opening suit overbid after passing in defensive bidding; therefore, his bid is a **obliged (forced) Pass** following his opponents' opening.

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In the third example, there was a *Pass in entry of game (right away)*, but the meaning of the second round Opening overbid *in color (or at level 1 or 2 without jump)* remains the same.

That is, after the *Pass* declaration in the first round, which is followed by the announcement of an Opening suit overbid at level 1ou 2 without jump in the next round, player #2 states precisely in these two different contexts: "I HAVE AT LEAST 5 TRUMP CARDS WITH TWO GH (SPECIFIED SUIT), BUT I ONLY HAVE 10-11 POINTS THAT ARE ALMOST NOT LOSING, AND THE POTENTIAL IS OFFENSIVE."

In conclusion, a second-round Opening suit overbid describes the same thing in the context of a narrowly disqualified hand as in the context of a forced disqualified hand.

What is important to realize is that the **forced disqualified hand context** can, **in addition**, describe a hand with MORE THAN 13 POINTS BUT WITHOUT A FIFTH SUIT.

This territory (the Opening overbids after *Passing*) belongs to the other two categories of second-round Opening overbids: the second-round takeout Double and the Cue-Bid of overbidding *Néron*.

In short, any disqualified hand that is forced disqualified and does not have a fifth suit can potentially be described as a second-round Opening overbid, either takeout Double or by Cue-Bid of overbidding *Néron*.

Therefore, there is no possible confusion between these three typrd of second-round Opening overbids and excellent coverage of this territory.

The three categories of second-round Opening overbids will be discussed as such in Themes **1.7**, **1.13**, and **1.14** of this Chapter.

Theme **1.5** is intended to introduce you to defensive bidding. Its main objective is to get you to consider defensive bidding as a COUNTEROFFENSIVE.

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