

# Bidding over the Opponents' Preemptive Openings

**“When in doubt” guidelines for actions in the direct seat** (right-hand opponent opens **2D, 2H, 2S, 3C, 3D, 3H** or **3S**):

- Overcall (rather than double) if you have 17 or fewer points and a decent 5-card suit.
- Use the **Rule of Seven** to decide if your overcall is “safe”. Try to imagine an “ordinary” (not perfect) 7 pts. in partner’s hand. If you could make your bid opposite that hand, you should overcall.
- Double (instead of overcalling a minor) if you have 3+-card support for unbid majors.
- Over the opponent's opening 3-bid, choose 3NT (instead of doubling or overcalling a minor) if you have 15+ points and stoppers in the opponent's suit.
- All notrump overcalls show notrump hands, not minors.
- Over a Weak 2-bid, use a jump to 3NT to show a good hand and a running suit. This jump usually denies takeout-double shape (you may be extremely short in an unbid suit). With a strong balanced hand, double first, then bid notrump.
- All jumps are **strong**. A jump overcall (2H by RHO - **3S** by you) forces to game and asks partner for a cuebid. Remember the rule: “You **can’t** preempt a preempt.”

**In the balancing seat** (2H-Pass-Pass-?):

- Stretch to compete if you’re short in their suit.
- For doubles and overcalls, mentally add an ace to your hand, then choose the same bid you would make in direct seat.
- Stretch a bit more to make a takeout double if you're short in their suit and the vulnerability is favorable (they’re red and you’re not). Partner may have a trump stack and convert your double to penalty.

**A helpful convention: Leaping Michaels** (direct-seat overcalls after they open a weak 2-bid)

**Over an opponent's Weak 2-Bid in a major** (opening of 2H or 2S), here are the meanings of "Leaping Michaels" direct overcalls:

- Jump in a minor (2S-**4C** or **4D**) = That minor + the other major, strong 5-5 or better
- Direct cuebid (2H-**3H**) = Asks for stopper for notrump.
- Jump cuebid (2H-**4H**, 2S-**4S**) = Both minors, strong 5-5 or better.

**Over an opponent's Weak 2D opening:** A jump cuebid (2D-**4D**) = Both majors

## Summary of Direct-Seat Actions

Your action:	Over their Weak 2-bid:	Over their 3-bid:
Simple overcall	10-17 pts. 5+ card suit	12-17 pts. 6+-card suit or strong 5+ cards
Double	12+ pts., shortness in their suit 3-4+ cards in all unbid suits	14+ pts., shortness in their suit 3+ cards in all unbid suits

	<b>OR</b> 18+ pts. and a long suit	<b>OR</b> 19+ pts. and a long suit
<b>Double, then bid a suit</b>	17+ pts. Strong 5+-card suit	18+ pts. Strong 5+-card suit
<b>Jump to 3S over 2H opener</b>	16+ pts., very strong 6+-card suit	
<b>Jump to 4 of a minor</b>	(2H/2S - <b>4C</b> or <b>4D</b> ) = Leaping Michaels Strong 5-5 or better in bid suit & other major	3C- <b>4D</b> = Strong one-suiter, asks for cuebid
<b>4H or 4S</b>	16+ pts. and a strong 6+-suit	16+ pts. and a strong 6+-suit
<b>Cuebid (2H-3H)</b>	Usually a strong 1-suiter Asks for stopper for notrump	Minor (3C- <b>4C</b> ) = Strong, at least 5-5 in both majors Major (3H- <b>4H</b> ) = Strong, at least 5-5 in spades and a minor
<b>Jump cuebid</b>	Leaping Michaels (2H- <b>4H</b> , 2D- <b>4D</b> )	
<b>2NT</b>	14-18 pts. balanced with stopper(s)	
<b>Double, then rebid NT</b>	18+ pts. balanced with stopper(s)	22+ pts. with stoppers and support for unbid suits
<b>3NT</b>	16+ pts. with stopper and a long running minor	16-22 pts. with stopper(s) May be a running minor and stopper(s)

## Responder's Actions

### After partner's direct overcall (2H-2S-Pass-?)

- **Pass** = 0-7 pts. (remember the Rule of Seven -- partner is already counting on you to hold an "average" 7-point hand).
- **Single raise of partner's suit** (2H-2S-P-**3S**) = 8-10 pts. and 3+-card support
- **Cuebid** of their suit (2H-2S-P-**3H**) = Strong raise of partner's suit, forcing to game.
- **Jump in another suit** (2H-2S-P-**4C**, **4D** or **4H**) = Splinter raise (slam-try values, trump support and a singleton in the bid suit)
- **New suit** (3C-3H-P-**3S**) = Forcing, 5+-card suit.
- **Double** (if RHO raises his partner's suit: 2H-2S-3H-**DBL**) = Responsive double, showing values (10+ pts.), length in the unbid suits, 2 or fewer cards in partner's suit.

### After partner's direct double (2H-DBL-Pass-?)

- Make your "normal" value bids:  
With a weak hand (0-7 points), make a low-level bid in your longest unbid suit (2H-DBL-Pass-**2S**, **3C** or **3D**)  
Jump to 3 of your suit with 8-10 pts. and a 5-card suit (2H-DBL-Pass-**3S**)  
Jump to game in your suit with 11+ pts.
- Consider adding the [Lebensohl convention](#) to your system to improve your bidding accuracy when you hold 0-11 points.

- If you're considering passing the double for penalties, use the **Rule of Nine**:  
*Add*: The level of their contract + number of your trumps + number of your trump honors (10 and higher).  
If the total is 9 or more, you can consider passing for penalty

#### **After partner's direct cuebid (2H-3H-Pass-?)**

- Bid notrump if you have a stopper in their suit.
- With no stopper, bid your cheapest 3-card suit.

#### **After partner's notrump overcall (2H-2NT-Pass-?)**

- Play "system on" – 3C is Stayman, 3D & 3H are transfers.
- If partner jumps to 3NT (2H-3NT), he could be short in an unbid suit, so don't insist on playing in your long suit. Unless you have slam-try values, pass.