



## PRE-EMPTIVE BIDS - FREAK HANDS

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One of the most interesting as well as difficult problems of Auction, is the proper bidding of freak hands. With hands sufficiently unusual to be considered of this type, all ordinary rules of procedure must be disregarded and each one treated as a separate and distinct problem.

To be properly considered a "freak", a hand must contain a suit of at least seven cards. A hand that contains a suit of but six cards, to be classed as a "freak", must contain other points of the unusual, such as another suit of the same or approximately the same length.

A good example of a six-card freak is the following:

♥ AQJ1095 ♣ - ♦ A ♠ KJ10964:

This type of hand, however, does not call for a preemptive or shut-out bid, as it may be necessary to show both suits.

The ordinary type of freak hand contains suits of seven or more cards, and their bidding is both interesting and difficult. It is this type of hand that calls for the pre-emptive or shut-out bid, a bid that to be properly employed, requires not only consummate knowledge of card probabilities, but of Auction psychology as well.

The basis of the pre-emptive bid is: sufficient strength to go game with but average support from partner. And its theory is: to shut-out, if possible, bids by opponents that might result in their uncovering a "game" bid between them.

Therefore, properly employed, the pre-emptive bid must, if left in, either go game with but average support from partner; or, lacking average support, same game by shutting out a "game" bid by opponents, in which case the resultant loss, if any, is amply compensated by the game so saved.

Granted that the object of the pre-emptive bid is to shut-out adverse bidding, it follows that pre-emptive bids less than "three" in Spades, "four" in Hearts of Spades, and "five" in Clubs or Diamonds, are seldom if ever justified. Therefore:

Original bids of three should be made only with a "freak" Spade hand of following type:

♥ 4	♥ -
♣ 7	♣ KQJ
♦ KQJ8	♦ 73
♠ AJ109864	♠ A10865432

If the Heart and Spade suits were reversed, the original bid would be Four Hearts - not three.

Original bids of Four should be made with any stronger Spade hand of the same type, for example:

♥ 2	♥ -
♣ KQJ7	♣ 5
♦ 8	♦ AQ65
♠ AKJ10743	♠ AJ1097542

♥ -  
 ♣ AKQ6  
 ♦ 8  
 ♠ QJ1097653

or with any Heart hand of the same type. Original bids or more than four in Major suits are seldom if ever justified.

Original bids of Five should be properly restricted to five Clubs, or five Diamonds. Their object is to shut-out, if possible, a game bid in Hearts or Spades; so it necessarily follows that any holding that would justify a four Spade or Heart bid, if held in Clubs or Diamonds, should be bid five at once, for example:

*(Note: the studious bridge reader will notice that the first example holds only 12 cards. It cannot be determined whether this is an error of the copying process utilized by Google or whether it is actually a misprint by the publisher of the book.)*

♥ 73		♥ K3
♣ AKQ10863		♣ AK
♦ AQ7		♦ KJ976532
♠ -		♠ 5
	♥ A6	
	♣ AQ8	
	♦ QJ1087532	
	♠ -	
♥ -		♥ -
♣ 10863		♣ AJ62
♦ AKQJ7543		♦ AJ1065432
♠ 2		♠ 7

Original bids or more than five are seldom necessary or sound. A hand would justify a bid of six or more does not as a rule require a preemptive bid.

### Freak Hands That Should be Bid Normally

Pre-emptive bids frequently defeat their object by revealing a game hand and so incite opponents to overbidding to same game; whereas, if bid up gradually, the contract could have been won more cheaply. Pre-emptive bids, therefore, can be boomerangs and, where unnecessary, should never be employed.

The following are examples of freak hands that do not call for a preemptive bid:

♥ AQ1063	♥ AKQ7543
♣ 7	♣ 96
♦ -	♦ A8
♠ AKQ9764	♠ AK
	♥ 653
	♣ -
	♦ AQ4
	♠ AKQJ763

Moreover, pre-emptive bids should be restricted to the initial bid of the hand. Bids of this class after opponents have shown a suit, do more harm than good. Such attempted shut-outs are

usually made by the partner of the original bidder on hands that are good for tricks only in the suit bid and so offer no defense in case opponents persist in bidding.

The result is that the attempted shut-out bid only forces partners to a contract they cannot make, or opponents to a contract that can be set but a trick or two at most.

Thus a good rule is, never attempt a shut-out bid after opponents have shown a suit. Bid the hand up as high as it justifies, but by easy stages. This conceals the nature of the strength held and is better calculated, under such conditions, to accomplish the result desired, that is, to win the bid as cheaply as possible.

A pre-emptive overbid of an opponent's No-Trump, to shut-out, if possible, a suit indication by partner of the No-Trumper, follows closely the evident purpose of pre-emptive bids, and therefore is not an exception to the rule.

### **Freak Hands That Should be Passed Originally**

Such hands are legion, and each is a rule unto itself. About all that can be said is, pass hands that are worthless as trick takers unless a given suit is trump. It is far better to pass holdings of this order and reenter the bidding later, than to attempt a pre-emptive bid. The chances of being doubled are too great, and the chances of "shutting-out" opponents too small, to warrant such procedure.

Examples of the class of hands referred to:

♥ KJ1087652	♥ Q3
♣ 843	♣ 54
♦ 2	♦ 8
♠ 9	♠ !10986532

In passing, however, pass with the firm intention of bidding suit on second round, even if a four bid is required - unless the bidding makes such course unsound or unnecessary.

### **Subsequent Procedure**

A pre-emptive bid, when properly made, indicates the full strength of the hand, and when so bid should not be re-bid under any circumstances. To arrive at the proper bid, the rule to follow is: if overbid, is hand strong enough to be re-bid? If so, then the number of tricks player is willing to bid should be bid in the first instance.

Inasmuch as a pre-emptive bid invariably includes average support from partner, it follows that partner should not increase a pre-emptive bid unless holding better than average support, except, possibly, to save a game otherwise apparently lost. Possible exceptions are the Original Three Spade bids, these bids may be raised (once) with but average support.

Where a pre-emptive bid is overcalled and partner passes, it must be apparent that partner either holds average, or less than average support, or judges it preferable to try to defeat opponents rather than offer speculative support. Whatever the reason for non-support Dealer must not go on in the face of partner's pass - tactics of this order are very unsound.

In rare cases, the pre-emptive bid is taken out by partner. Where this occurs, it should be indicate a sure game wholly irrespective of hand of original bidder.

### **Pre-emptive No-Trump Bids**

Original bids of more than one No-Trumps are seldom justified for the reason that if Dealer is strong enough to re-bid, he can well afford to bid one at the start. If overbid, he is then in

position either to bid two No-Trumps or double, according to what would then appear the better course.

To bid two No-Trumps merely because the hand contains 100 Aces, and for no other reason, is unsound as it frequently prevents partners from arriving at the best bid of the two hands. Two No-Trumps may be bid at times for strategic reasons, but such bids are for experts and should be used only with great discretion.

The following is a good example of a strategic two No-Trump bid:

♥ J9 ♣ J1098 ♦ AK73 ♠ Q95

Score, rubber game: Dealer 10 ... Opponents 20.

Because of this score, two No-Trumps was bid in this instance to shut-out a two bid by opponents, which, if made, would have given them game and rubber. Too weak to bid two No-Trumps if overbid. Dealer bid two at the start. The theory of the bid is that if opponents hold the missing strength they may pass and trust to their big cards to defeat the contract. If partner even holds an average hand, there is a good chance to make contract. If defeated, Dealer is certain to save game. With any stronger holding Dealer would have bid one on the theory that game was in no danger. Also, if opponents were not advanced on score, Dealer would have bid but on No-Trumps.

There are some players who believe in the pre-emptive bid, not only with the so-called "freak" hands, but also with normal hands. There is no question but that such bids win at times, but in the long run they are bound to lose. There is too much guessing about it, and guessing always loses when opposed by hard facts.

Normal hand should be bid up gradually; first, to give exact information; and second, to arrive at the best bid of the two hands. For that reason, pre-emptive or shut-out bids should be restricted to "freak" hands of the type described in this article; and normal hands should be bid in the normal way. Eliminate guess-work as to the best bid, and strive to give exact information whenever possible. That is the secret of good bidding, and winning Auction Bridge.