

What do you need to remember about weak openings?

An opening bid at the three level shows a weak hand with a good 7-card suit that has at least two honours.

The hand should be too weak to open at the one level – including hands you would open using the rule of twenty.

If your partner has not yet had an opportunity to bid, you should not have a side 4-card major suit because of the risk of missing a better contract.

You should have few defensive tricks.

You need 6 playing tricks if you are non-vulnerable and 7 playing tricks if you are vulnerable.

To assess your playing tricks, allocate partner one card in the trump suit and imagine the opposition's trump cards divide as expected: five missing cards will usually divide 3-2, four missing cards 3-1.

An opening bid at the 4 level shows a weak hand with a good 8-card suit: you have one more trick so you can pre-empt at one higher level.

An opening bid of 3NT shows a long solid minor suit with no more than a queen in the side suits. This is 'improver' level and is mentioned here just so you know it exists. Don't try to use it just yet!

To show a pre-empt overcall you need to bid a double jump over opener's bid. For example: 1♠ - 4♣ or 1♦ - 3♥

To pre-empt: "to acquire in advance of or to the exclusion of others" Collins English dictionary

Why should you bid at such a high level with a hand so weak?

In the words of Andrew Robson:

"The bid fulfils a dual objective:

- (a) It tells partner that there is just one possible trump suit for the partnership.
- (b) It makes things very difficult for the opposition, who have been robbed of so much bidding space."

How many HCPs should you have?

The Beginning Bridge book says: "You will normally have between 5 and 9 points". Andrew Robson says 3 – 10! The Really Easy series does not state a point range as your focus should be on playing tricks rather than HCPs.

Vulnerability is relevant as although you expect not to make your contract you don't want to lose more than if you had 'passed' and the opposition had bid and made game.

How many points would you lose?

50 points per trick non-vulnerable and 100 points per trick vulnerable but if the opposition double the penalties really kick in:

	I	II
-1	100	200
-2	300	500
-3	500	800
-4	800	1100
-5	1100	1400
-6	1400	1700
-7	1700	2000
-8	2000	2300
-9	2300	2600
-10	2600	2900
-11	2900	3200
-12	3200	3500
-13	3500	3800

Bidding Box®
©Jannersten Förlag AB
S-774 27 AVESTA, Sweden

Homework: Red book pages 139-144