

Pre-Empts

Definition: Make a high bid in a suit with a weak hand and a long trump suit.

Purpose: Obstruct the opponents. Use up their bidding space. Pre-sacrifice.
Usually expect to be down 1-3 tricks.

Opening Bids of 2 or More in a Suit (or jump overcalls of 2D or higher):

- **2C:** Very strong hand, 22+ points or 9 1/2 tricks. (Discussed later.)
- **2D/2H/2S:** 6 card suit, 5-11 points
- **3 of a suit:** 7 card suit, less than opening strength.
- **4 of a suit:** 8 card suit, less than opening strength.
- **5 of a minor:** 9 card minor suit, less than opening strength.
- **Bid as high as you are willing to go on your first bid.** Then don't bid again.

Consider Your Bidding Position:

- **1st Seat:** Obstructs 2 opponents and 1 partner. 67% good, 33% bad.
- **2nd Seat:** Obstructs 1 opponent and 1 partner. 50% good, 50% bad.
- **3rd Seat:** Obstructs 1 opponent and no partner. 100% good.
- **4th Seat:** Do not preempt. Pass instead. There is no one left to obstruct.

In 1st & 2nd seats, with close to an opening hand, be wary of obstructing partner. You might scare partner away from a makeable game. In 3rd seat, anything goes, partner has already passed.

Consider Vulnerability, Yours & Theirs:

- **NonVul vs Vul:** Best case. Can be quite weak. Down 3 doubled is less than their game.
- **Equal Vul:** Not quite as good. Need better hand or better suit. Can only afford down 2.
- **Vul vs NonVul:** Even down 2 might be bad score. Need almost an opener and a good suit. (Or bid 1 less than usual: bid 2 with a 7 card suit, bid 3 with an 8 card suit.)
- **Count partner for 1 trick** when considering how many tricks you can make.

Partner of Preemptor:

- **Raise 3 of a major to game with 2 Aces + 1 King (or better):** Partner will be short in the side suits. Will need quick winners (A, K), not slow winners (Q, J). Don't worry about the trump suit; partner has that covered.
- **Raise a minor as a sacrifice:** If you too are weak and think they can make a major suit game, sacrifice in 5 of the minor. (You will be doubled. Watch vulnerability.)
- **Bid 3NT:** Need a strong hand and support for partner so that you can run the long suit.
- **Pass otherwise.**

Suit Quality:

Some pairs promise 2 of top 3 when opening 3 of a minor in 1st or 2nd seat, so partner will know when 3NT is safe. But this is not common. (Not in seats 3 & 4: passed-hand partner should not bid 3NT. Not with a major: bid 4 of the major, not 3NT.)

Opponent of Preemptor:

- **Overcall** with a good 5 card suit and a good opening hand (14+ points)
- **Double** is for takeout, not for penalty. (This is the modern trend.)
- **Bid NT** with opponent suit double stopped and a strong hand.
- **Don't bid with a weak hand**, even if you too have a long suit.

Examples: (Opponent bids shown in brackets.)

1. **3H**: Expect opener to have 7 hearts and less than an opening hand. If non-vul against vul, might have as few as 4-5 points and a suit headed only by QJ. If vul against non-vul, should have 8-10 points and a better suit.
2. **4C**: Similar to above, but expect opener to have 8 clubs.
3. **5D**: Similar to above, but expect opener to have 9 diamonds.
4. **2S**: Expect opener to have 6 spades and 5-11 points.
5. **3H-(P)-4H**: Opener shows a weak hand with 7 hearts. Responder should have 2 Aces and 1 King to take partner to game. Having 15 points without any Aces is usually not enough.
6. **3C-(3S)-5C**: Responder has a weak hand. Believes opponents will bid and make 4S. Bids 5C as an advance sacrifice. Should not do this with a strong hand and/or good spades. In those cases, 4S might not make.
7. **3C-(3S)-P-(4S)-P-(P)-5C**: Responder waits until opponents have actually bid 4S, in case they might stop in 3S. Preemptor should not bid again. Partner of preemptor decides.
8. **3D-(P)-3NT**: Opener shows a weak hand with 7 diamonds. If responder does not have 9 tricks in responder's hand, responder should have probably 3 diamonds to get back to opener's hand to run the diamonds. Usually need 4-5 tricks in the long suit to succeed.
9. **(3H)-3S**: After opponent preempts 3H, the 3S bid shows a 5+ card spade suit and more than minimum opener (14+ points rather than 12-13, because bidding level is so high.)
10. **(3D)-X-(P)-4S**: After opponent preempts 3D, the X is a takeout double. Advancer shows about 11+ points with the jump to game. (14+ & 11+ = 25+, enough for game).
11. **(4C)-X-(P)-P**: After opponent preempt, the X is for takeout. Advancer can pass for penalty if confident that 4C can be defeated for more points than making your own game. Should have some sure trump tricks for this. Preemptor can have voids and ruff your Aces.
12. **(3D)-3NT**: The 3NT bidder should have diamonds stopped twice and a strong hand (perhaps 18+ rather than 15+) or a source of tricks such as AKQxxx in another suit.