

Preemptive Opening Bids in 1st or 2nd Seat

2D, 2H, 2S, 3C, 3D, 3H, 3S, 4C, 4D, 4H, 4S, 5C, 5H and 5S are ALL preemptive bids. They should all be made on hands which will take lots of tricks played in your long suit but contain few, if any, tricks when played in the opponents' suit. It's a very good idea to have agreements with partner about the sort of hands on which you would preempt. Here are the rules and agreements which I like to follow when deciding whether or not to make a preemptive opening bid:-

1. Usually from a good 5 to a bad 12HCP
2. At the 2 level a 6 card suit
At the 3 level a 7 card suit (although 3C sometimes on 6)
At the 4 level a 7 or 8 card suit
At the 5 level 8 or 9 card suit
3. The suit should be good ----- headed by 2 of the top 3 honors or 3 of the top 5.
4. Vulnerability is of some importance. I am usually within 2 tricks of my Preempt when vulnerable, 3 tricks when not vulnerable.
5. I NEVER have 2 Aces. With 2 Aces and a good 6 or 7 card suit, the hand is a 1 opener.
6. I Never have an outside 4 card major.
7. I often treat hands with a good 6 card suit and an outside 4 card minor, as if they have a 7 card suit and open at the 3 level.

Responding to partner's opening preempt, it's important to realize that a fit and Aces and Kings are what you need. Without a fit, you need at least 15HCP to even consider inviting or going to game.

REMEMBER THAT IF YOU BID A NEW SUIT OVER
PARTNER'S PREEMPT, IT IS 100% FORCING.

1st & 2nd Seat Preempts or not?

1. DlrN KQ109653

None	5	N	E	S	W
	106	3S	Pass	4S	?
	954				

J 72
 AK74 QJ10
 KJ7 Q954
 A8763 KQJ10
 A84
 98532
 A832
 2

North has a respectable 3S preempt with a good 7 card suit headed by 2 of the top 3 honors. Even with only 8 HCP, South should raise to 4S because the hand will provide North with a number of tricks. The 10 card fit, the 2 Aces and the singleton club mean that NS may well take 7 spade tricks, AD and possibly a couple of club ruffs. In addition, South knows that EW definitely have the balance of the points and, since they only have 3 spades between them, they probably have a fit somewhere. EW may well make a good contract their way but NS will make a lot of tricks in spades maybe even 10!!

West has a real problem with 16HCP and no really good suit to bid. Some Wests would double, some would bid 4NT for Takeout, some would pass. NS actually make 4S without a trump lead but EW can make 5C ... if they can find it!!

2. DlrE 52

NSvul	QJ85	N	E	S	W
	852		Pass	Pass	1S
	AK85	Pass	4C	Pass	4S

KJ987 Q1063
 AK6 102
 3 AJ10964
 J1096 4
 A4
 9743
 KQ7
 Q732

East has the perfect diamond suit (and the right point count) to open 2D. However, I would never break the agreement which I have with myself to never preempt with an outside 4 card major. On this hand, if East did open 2D, that might end the auction. West has only 12 HCP opposite 5 – 11 and has no diamond fit. Most West's would pass 2D. North would also pass with no suit to bid and a spade holding which inhibits a Takeout Double. Notice

that when East passes, West opens 1S and now East's hand becomes huge so big in fact that I would Splinter with 4C, showing 4 card spade support, a singleton club and hopes of making 4S. Played carefully, 4S can make 11 tricks a better result than being left in 2D!!

12. DlrS 542

	AK1097	N	E	S	W
	K5			2D	Pass
	AQ8	2H	Pass	3H	Pass
QJ963	A108	4H	All Pass		

J2 Q84
 73 J82
 K653 J1092
 K7
 653
 AQ10964
 74

Over 2D, North has 16HCP which may well be enough for game. 3NT may not be good with no spade stopper and going all the way up to 5D is rarely the correct contract. North can bid 2H WHICH IS 100% FORCING and shows at least a good 5 card suit. South's first duty over 2H is to support with 3 or even a doubleton honor. Without support, South would rebid diamonds with a minimum Weak Two or bid an outside feature with a maximum. On this hand, as soon as North hears heart support, the final contract is clear.

Preempting in 3rd (or 4th) Seat

I'm a firm believer in DISCIPLINED preemptive bids in 1st or 2nd seat (In other words, before partner has had a chance to bid). If you don't follow the rules and agreements which you have with partner, you are likely to cause him/her more problems than you cause the opponents. Your 1st and 2nd seat preempts are CONSTRUCTIVE for partner. HOWEVER, in 3rd seat, when your partner has passed, it is a completely different story. You are actually in a unique position. You know more about the hand than any other player at the table:-

- A. If you hold 0 HCP, the opponents have at least 29 HCP.
In fact if partner has 5, the opponents have 35. With 0, they have 40!!
- B. If you hold 5 HCP, the opponents have at least 24 HCP.
In fact, if partner has 5, the opponents have 30. With 0, they have 35!!
- C. If you hold 10 HCP, the opponents have at least 20 HCP.
In fact, if partner has 5 HCP, the opponents have 25 HCP. With 0, they have 30!!

As you can see, in the vast majority of cases, the hand belongs to the opponents. NOONE ELSE KNOWS THIS. Your job is not to make a bid which is CONSTRUCTIVE for partner it's to make a bid which is DESTRUCTIVE for the opponents. Your intention is to make a bid which will prevent them from having a simple, natural auction which will get them to their correct contract. Your purpose is to make it very difficult for them to find out their point strength, to stop them from finding a fit and to sow doubts in their minds as to how high they should be going. Consequently, you should preempt on MANY hands which you would pass in 1st or 2nd seat. For example:-

1. You don't need to have a good suit.
2. Stretch your preempts by imagining that you have one more card than you actually have.
3. Even without 5 – 12 HCP, you can still preempt. (in fact, the less you have, the more important it is).

I can hear you saying to yourselves "This sounds dangerous" but even when you are vulnerable, you are not in too much danger from the opponents. Most of them play that Doubles are for Takeout. THERE IS A DANGER THOUGH. It comes from partner. Partner must realize that your 3rd seat preempts show very little. The only time partner should bid is when they have a big fit with your preemptive suit I would say a minimum of 4 cards. Just hope that the 3rd seat preempt has already done it's damage, without you having to bid.

4th seat preempts are not really preempts at all. Most people play that they show a good suit and an opening bid (approximately 11 – 15 HCP). This is an excellent way to play 4th suit bids at the 2 and 3 level.

3rd Seat Opening Hands

1. DirN 973

None K1098

J74

875

Q6 854

AQ5 762

AQ1065 K93

K94 AQJ6

AKJ102

J54

82

1032

N	E	S	W
Pass	Pass	2S	3D
Pass	3S	Pass	4D
5D	All Pass		
PASS	3D		

North is a passed hand so South suspects that the hand belongs to EW. If North should happen to be on lead, South wants a spade lead and should take the opportunity to bid them. 1S or 2S? I would prefer 2S so that partner knows that I don't have an opening bid. Remember that a preempt in 3rd seat has no guarantees of suit length or quality. North should not bid over 2S unless he/she has a big spade fit. If South had passed, West would have opened 1NT, East would have bid 3NT and North would have led 10H. West would have made 11 tricks in 3NT. Once South opens 2S, EW can never make a game.

2. DirE 6

NS vul AKJ1065

Q92

KQ2

QJ98732 K10

82 974

8 J765

1085 A976

A64

Q3

AK1043

J43

N	E	S	W
	Pass	1D	4S
?	?	?	?

West only has 3HCP and partner is a passed hand. Interesting? It means that NS MUST have a game their way ... or maybe a slam... AND they are vulnerable.. You are the luckiest player on the planet .. you have a 7 card suit to bid ... and you are nonvulnerable. To bid anything less than 4S would be "WIMPY". Look at the problem which you've given North. You only go down 3 in 4S but NS make 6D or 6H. How do they get there over 4S?

3. DirS J97654

EWvul 2

QJ10

942

A2 K43

K10763 A984

872 A65

AQ7 KJ5

Q10

QJ5

K943

10863

N	E	S	W
		Pass	1H
3S	?		

With South being a passed hand, North has only 3 HCP and knows that NS have at least 26HCP. Over 1H, North might be tempted to bid 2S but at this vulnerability, I would put the pressure on East by bidding 3S. Over 2S, East would have bid 3S and West would have signed off in 4H with a minimum opener. Over 3S, what would East have done? 4H doesn't seem enough with 15HCP and a 4 card heart fit. Would East have tried 4NT? Or maybe cuebid spades. 3S would have gone down 3 but if EW venture past the 4 level in hearts, they hit disaster, losing a heart and 2 diamonds. The 3rd seat preempt certainly gives EW a chance to go wrong.

ARE YOU BRAVE ENOUGH..... TO PREEMPT IN 3rd SEAT

I am a great believer in DISCIPLINED preemptive bids in 1st and 2nd seat (in other words BEFORE partner has had a chance to bid). 1st and 2nd seat preempts should always be GOOD suits, 2 of the top three honors or 3 of the top five. Always have a 6 card suit for a Weak Two and a 7 card suit for a Weak Three. (except that 3c can be made with only 6). IF YOU DON'T FOLLOW THESE AGREEMENTS, YOU ARE LIKELY TO CAUSE PARTNER MORE PROBLEMS THAN YOU CAUSE THE OPPONENTS. YOUR PREEMPTS ARE CONSTRUCTIVE FOR PARTNER.

HOWEVER, in 3rd seat, when your partner has passed, it is a completely different story. You are in a unique position. You know more about the hand than any other player at the table.

- A. If you hold 0 pts, the opponents have at least 29 pts (In fact, if partner holds only 5 pts, they have 35 pts).
- B. If you hold 5 pts, the opponents have at least 24 pts. (In fact, if partner holds only 5 pts, they have 30 pts).
- C. If you hold 10 pts, the opponents have at least 19 pts (In fact, if partner holds only 5 pts, they have 25 pts).

As you can see, in the vast majority of cases, the hand belongs to the opponents. NO ONE ELSE KNOWS THIS. It's your job to prevent the opponents from having a simple, natural auction which will get them to the correct contract. Your purpose is to be DESTRUCTIVE and you should preempt on hands which you would pass in 1st or 2nd seat. Note the following: -

- (a) You don't need a good suit.
- (b) Stretch your preempts by imagining you have one more card than you actually have.
- (c) Even without 6-10 pts you can still preempt. (In fact the less you have, the more important it is).

PARTNER SHOULD NOT RAISE YOUR 3rd SEAT PREEMPTS UNLESS HE HAS A BIG FIT - - - AT LEAST FOUR.

① N
 None 973
 K1098
 J74
 875

Q6
 A33
 A01065
 K94

854
 762
 K93
 A0256

AKJ102
 Q54
 82
 1032

POSSIBLE AUCTION

N	E	S	W
P	P	2S	

North is a passed hand so South suspects that EW have a contract their way. If North is on lead, South wants a spade lead and should take this opportunity to bid them. 1S or 2S? I would prefer 2S showing 6-10 pts. (If South passes, EW get to 3NT & make without a spade lead)

② E
 NS Vul

AKJ1065
 Q92
 KQ2

QJ98732
 82
 8
 1085

K10
 974
 J765
 A976

A54
 Q3
 AK1043
 J43

POSSIBLE AUCTION

E	S	W	N
P	W	4S	5H
P	?		

East is a passed hand and West only has 3 pts! West knows NS have at least a vulnerable game and should put pressure on North by bidding 4S in 3rd seat. It's very tough for NS to reach their 6H slam.

③ S
 EW Vul

82
 9
 82
 K01087654

J943
 108654
 A7
 92

KQ76
 AKQ3
 K953
 A

A105
 J72
 QJ1064
 J3

POSSIBLE AUCTION

S	W	N	E
P	P	5C	Dble
P	?	?	?

South is a passed hand and North only has 5 pts! North knows EW have a vulnerable game at least and should pressure East by opening 5C. It's tough for EW to find their 6H or 6S slam.

④ W Both

A83
 K83
 764
 A943
 J105
 J954
 Q53
 J105
 K2
 A106
 A5
 KQ762
 Q9764
 7
 K10982
 8

POSSIBLE AUCTION

W	N	E	S
P	P	2S	Dble
P	?	?	?

West is a paired hand and East has only 5 pts! NS must have a vulnerable game at least. Even with only 5 spades, I would open 2S to put pressure on South. NS can make 6C but it's tough to get there.

⑤ N NS vul

J742
 9
 9862
 KQ105
 A095
 J3
 Q57
 A582
 3
 AKQ107652
 3
 976
 K1086
 84
 AK1054
 43

POSSIBLE AUCTION

N	E	S	W
P	P	4H	?
?	?	.	.

With the South hand I would open 4H even in 1st seat. It's tough for EW — they make 4S but not 5D. (With the West hand, I would double 4H although a little reluctantly. EW should bid 4S not 5D)

⑥ E EW vul

93
 Q86
 J10872
 A82
 KQJ8762
 K7
 9
 1043
 104
 953
 Q53
 KQ965
 A5
 A51042
 AK64
 J7

POSSIBLE AUCTION

E	S	W	N
P	1H	3S	P
P	Dble	P	4H
P	P	P	

East is a paired hand so West should bid 3S even tho' the vulnerability is a little scary. In 4H South should play for the diamonds to be 3-1 since West has preempted. Taking the diamond finesse allows South to make 5H.

⑦ S Both
 2
 KQ1093
 A76
 9853
 1074
 6542
 Q5
 AK64
 AKJ63
 A7
 KJ4
 Q72
 Q985
 J8
 109832
 J10

POSSIBLE AUCTION			
S	W	N	E
P	P	2H	Dble
P	3C	P	3S
P	4S	P	P

South is a passed hand. In the North seat I would open 2H, preemptive and lead directing. Without this bid East easily makes 4S but on 3H lead, East has problems.

⑧ W None
 J74
 K6
 A943
 K652
 952
 Q102
 J86
 J1093
 6
 J987543
 72
 Q74
 AKQ1083
 A
 KQ105
 A8

POSSIBLE AUCTION			
W	N	E	S
P	P	4H	?

West is a passed hand and East only has 3 pts. As dealer I would NEVER bid with the East hand, but in this position I would open at least 3H. -- no, let's push it, 4H!! If South just bids 4S, North may pass and NS miss the grand slam.

⑨ N EW vul
 QJ82
 84
 Q82
 Q1095
 AK763
 A055
 A
 K62
 94
 10963
 K7
 A-J943
 105
 K72
 J1096543
 7

POSSIBLE AUCTION			
N	E	S	W
P	P	4D	Dble
P	4H	?	?
?			

With the South hand I would never preempt as dealer but opposite a passed partner I would pressure EW by opening 4D.

 EW can actually make 13 tricks in hearts with both club and heart finesses.