



Pre-emptive Bidding

Some hands have a lot of playing strength but few high cards.

They will make a lot of tricks if trump is their long suit, very few if some other suit is trump.

With such hands we would rather be declarer than a defender.

When we get the chance we open them with a **Pre-emptive Bid** or **Pre-empt** (getting our blow in first).

♠ AKQJ9763	♠ 76	♠	♠ 7
♥ 85	♥ 1053	♥ 83	♥ AKJ10865
♦ 9	♦ AQJ10632	♦ 5	♦ 9432
♣ 42	♣ 4	♣ KQJ10976432	♣ 3
10 HCP, 8 PT in ♠s	7HCP, 6PT in ♦s	6HCP, 9PT in ♣s	8HCP, 6/7PT in ♥s
1 defensive trick	1/2 defensive tricks	0 defensive tricks	2 defensive tricks
Open 4♠ at any vul	Open 3♦ non-vul (vul too!)	Open 5♣ at any vul	Open 3♥ vul, 4♥ nonvul

A **pre-emptive opening bid** is an opening bid in a suit at the 3-level or higher.

The aim is to play the hand in our best suit, or to complicate opponents' bidding by using up their space.

Requirements for a pre-emptive opener

1. A good suit of at least 7-cards
2. Not enough HCP for an opening bid at the 1-level (seldom more than 10, certainly less than 13)
3. Playing strength according to the Rule of 2 and 3 – also known as the Rule of 500.

(We looked at the Rule of 2 and 3 when discussing overcalls: if you have enough PT to fall 2 short of your target when vulnerable, 3 when not vulnerable, the penalty, if opponents double, will be no more than 500)

Pre-emptive overcalls

Even when opponents have opened the bidding we may make a pre-emptive bid with a suitable hand.

A pre-emptive overcall is at least a **single jump** in a suit

If RHO opens 1♣/♦/♥ 1♠ is a **simple overcall** with 4+PT

2♠ is a **weak jump overcall**: 5+PT, a good 6+ suit and around opening values

3♠ is a **preemptive overcall** with 6/7 PT, a 7-card suit and few HCP

4♠ is also **preemptive** with 7/8 PT, according to vulnerability.



Pre-emptive Bidding

Responding to pre-emptive bids

These are the reasons for bidding when partner pre-empts:

1. You have a strong hand and think your side can make game
2. You have length in partner's suit in a weak hand, so that opponents can certainly make game

The weak hand with support can continue the pre-emption by raising partner to game

The strong type can also raise to game, provided its values are in Quick Tricks (aces and kings)

You do not need much in the way of trump support to raise partner - he has a 7-card suit

So ***do not bid no-trump because you have a shortage in partner's suit: raise him with a singleton or void.***

You should bid no-trump only with a fit for partner (Ax or Kx at least) so that you expect to run his suit, or with a long suit of your own which you hope to run.

Very rarely if you have a very good suit you can bid it – but remember that partner probably has a better one.

Coping with pre-emptive bids

There is no sure way of doing the right thing over a pre-empt - that is why they are so popular.

Over a 3-level pre-empt, when you have opening values or a stronger hand you have these options:

1. Bid a good 5+card suit of your own, jumping to game with the values for a 2-opener
2. Bid 3NT with a stopper in opponent's suit and 16+HCP, perhaps a running suit of your own
3. Double for takeout, just as you would over a 1-level opener.
But since you are asking partner to bid at the 3-level or higher you need to be a little bit stronger than usual.

As a general rule, do not bid over a pre-empt with a weak hand: ***"Never pre-empt over a pre-empt"***