

Stamford Bridge Club

2nd September 2015

Pre-emptive Bidding

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First a restatement of all 1 and 2 level opening bids we've already covered

With the exception of 2♥/2♠ all opening bids at the 1 and 2 level show opening points or better (usually 11+)

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2♥/2♠ show 6card suits with 5-9 high card points (HCPs) – our first look at weak opening bids

Pre-empts at higher levels are similar but show greater length

3level pre-empts – usually 7card suits

4level pre-empts – usually 8card suits

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Why are these bids useful?

What we stated for weak two openings also applies.

**Frequent** (lots of hands in the 5-9 hcp range)

**Closely defined**

Partner can quickly assess where we are going (may assist greatly in reaching game)

**Pre-emptive** (inevitably)

We force the opponents to start bidding at a level higher than they would like. That increases the possibility of their being at the wrong level or in the wrong suit. We might find a profitable sacrifice.

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The criteria we used at the 2 level are relevant to the higher levels ... so

**5-9** high card points

Opened suit has “**reasonable**” quality –  
(e.g. K Q 10 9 x x x **OK**  
J 8 6 5 4 3 2 **Not OK** )

**HCPs** in the **longer suits**, particularly the bid suit, an asset

Have regard to **vulnerability** – be more conservative when vulnerable (be **penalty-conscious**)

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And we can add a few other comments:

**Not 4cards** in the **other major**

Be careful if holding a **void or two aces** (makes hand more/too powerful)

**Usual shapes** for 3level openings (which partner will mentally place you with)  
7321 or 7222 or 7411 (with the last, the side suit is a minor)

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These are good rules to follow (you won't go far wrong). They are slightly more aggressive than the old **Rule of 500** tool for pre-emptive bidding which you can also use as a guide.

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e.g.

♠ K Q J 9 6 4 3  
♥ 9  
♦ 10 5  
♣ J 9 6

**Rule of 500** states “open at the level that is consistent with going for minus 500 if partner has nothing”. If partner has nothing, the opponents will be able to make game or slam.

Here there's a reasonable expectation of 6 tricks (hoping ♠10 falls)

So **not vulnerable** – open 3♠  
And **vulnerable** – open 2♠

(But in the modern game most will open 3♠ at both vulnerabilities)

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### Here are some good modern examples:

♠ 6 4	
♥ K J 10 8 7 5 3	Probably 3♥ V or NV;
♦ K 4 2	some might bid 2♥ V
♣ 6	
♠ 4	
♥ A Q 10 8 6 5 4	Standard 3♥ V or NV;
♦ Q 10 9 7	some might bid 4♥ NV
♣ 2	(extra shape)

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### Some bad examples

♠ Q 10 9	
♥ J 8 6 5 4 3 2	3♥ X Pass ✓
♦ A 7	poor suit;
♣ 2	defensive strength
♠ Q 10 9 4	
♥ A Q 10 8 7 6 5	3♥ X Pass ✓
♦ 2	good suit but 4card
♣ 6	major on the side

(Talk Board 1) – a typical example

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### Some high-level bids are rare but for completeness:

- 3N A solid minor (A K Q J x x x or better, at most one outside queen)
- 4♣/♦ Usually a broken 8card suit
- 5♣/♦ A more solid 8/9card minor
- 5♥/♠ Not pre-emptive – asking partner to bid a small slam with A or K of suit; to bid the grand slam with both

e.g. ♠ J 10 9 8 7 6      Open 5♠  
       A K Q  
       A K Q  
       - void -

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### What responses do we make?

Try to **visualise** what partner has. With a pre-empt that's easier than a sound 1 or 2 level opening as you can place most of the values in opener's long suit.

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Partner opens a vulnerable 3♠. We place him with A Q J x x x x in his suit and nothing else. We slot in a typical pattern for the outside cards:

♠ A Q J x x x x  
♥ x  
♦ x x  
♣ x x x

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(partner)

♠ A Q J x x x x  
♥ x  
♦ x x  
♣ x x x

(our hand)

♠ K 4  
♥ A K 6  
♦ Q 10 9 4 2  
♣ K 9 6

Raise to 4♠. *Hope for 7 spades, 2 hearts, perhaps ♣A well-placed*

♠ A Q J x x x x  
♥ x  
♦ x x  
♣ x x x

♠ - void -  
♥ A J 9  
♦ A K Q 10 9 4 2  
♣ Q J 6

Bid 3N. *8 clear winners and one in the wash (or they play a spade)*

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♠ A Q J x x x x  
♥ x  
♦ x x  
♣ x x x

♠ 9  
♥ A K 7 3  
♦ A 9 3 2  
♣ A 7 4 2

Bid 4♠. 6 spades and 4 outside tricks realistic

♠ A Q J x x x x  
♥ x  
♦ x x  
♣ x x x

♠ K 10 7 2  
♥ 8 4 3 2  
♦ 9  
♣ A 7 4 2

Bid 4♠ (especially if oppos V). *A sacrifice – expect to make 9 tricks vs their game+ (minus 200 at worst). Give partner an extra diamond and a club fewer and it makes!*

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♠ A Q J x x x x  
♥ x  
♦ x x  
♣ x x x

♠ 9  
♥ K Q 3 2  
♦ K Q 3 2  
♣ K Q 3 2

Pass – likely losing 3 aces and a trump. 3N – no source of tricks

... and one if not vulnerable:

♠ A Q J x x x x  
♥ x  
♦ x x  
♣ x x x

♠ 10 8 5 2  
♥ 6  
♦ Q 10 9 4 3 2  
♣ K 9

Bid 4♠ or even 5♠! – *the opponents are very close to a slam. A clear advance sacrifice*

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Summary of some sequences

**3major – 4major** To make or sacrifice –  
let them guess!  
**3level – 3N** Expect to make

And some less common ones:

**3level – 3new suit** Forcing but these  
auctions are rare  
**3minor – 4minor** Not invitational –  
merely increasing the  
pre-empt  
**3minor – 5minor** To make or sacrifice –  
let them guess!

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And an example using **visualisation**

(Talk Board 2)

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Next week we'll have a look at a few **pitfalls**  
when we decide to open with a pre-emptive  
bid.

We'll cover **defending against pre-empts** in a  
separate workshop

... in the meantime, board 1 beckons

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