

Stamford Bridge Club

16th March 2016

Countering Enemy Preempts

1

You are looking at your reasonable hand and thinking of opening with a one level bid.

You notice your left hand opponent has a chance to open the bidding. You hope he passes.

2

He doesn't. Perhaps he opens a weak two in hearts (2♥) or perhaps he has very long spades and opens 3♠.

Our plans for a simple life have been disrupted. We shall have to fight a rearguard action.

Let's try **Board 1**

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Board 1 tells us that we can use a takeout double over preemptive openings in the same way that we do over 1level opening bids.

We use our **SOS thinking** in a similar way. To re-state. We'd *like* our takeout doubles to obey our three rules:

S - shortage in the opener's suit
O - opening points (11+hcps) and
S - support for the other three suits (usually 4cards each in two suits and 3/4cards in the third).

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But sometimes life's isn't so simple.

Have a look at **Board 2**

Board 2 tells us that we have to be flexible. We do not live in a perfect world. We may use a bid that is not ideal but it may still work.

It's important to realise that when the opponents pre-empt, they take up a lot of our bidding space. We may have to use some imagination.

When we **reply to a 3level pre-empt we should generally raise to game with 10-11hcps** – we have **NO ROOM** to invite and the cost of missing game is too high.

Board 3 provides us with another variation on what we've looked at so far.

So we can say that **in response to a takeout double of a preemptive bid, a non-game jump is invitational (c.10-12hcps)**. Because it is invitational it isn't forcing but partner will bid game if a little better than minimum.

We have other ways into the auction so let's take the cards from **Board 4**

So our overcalls are similar to what we would do over a 1level bid. **At the 2level they promise 5 or more cards of reasonable quality (c.10+hcps). If partner has support and about 10-11hcps he can invite game.**

(If the overcall has been made at the **3level** we'd like the suit to have **at least 6cards** ... but may, sometimes, have to make the bid with 5. **At the 3level the overcaller is likely to have opening values [12+hcps]).**

And **Board 5** provides more practice.

We have to use our judgement. Here bidding **3♣** may well have seen partner passing. We have as good as eight clear trick so are looking for partner to provide just two good cards.

We have not exhausted the types of hands where we may want to do something. Have a look at **Board 6**.

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When we looked at 1N overcalls we said “**Use a range of 15-18**”. That’s because **it’s the same range as 2N overcalls over weak two openings**. (less memory strain)

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We **respond to 2N** in the same way as we do to a 2N opening (or 2N rebid after a 2♣/2♦ start). Namely:

- 3♣ **Stayman**
- 3♦ **Transfer to hearts**
- 3♥ **Transfer to spades**

[but remember to take into account the lower point count when judging the level at which to play]

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On Board 6 the opponents have been “kind” to us. Less so on **Board 7**.

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When the opposition bid so high we have little room for manoeuvre. It's usual to play that after a 3level pre-empt

3N **Shows at least one stop and about 16-22 hcp**

We don't play conventions over this. **All bids are natural.** The partner of the 3N bidder may, for example, bid a 6card major (or guess to bid a 5card one, though no 8card fit is guaranteed)

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Boards 1 to 7 generally suggest that the preemptor creates havoc and the other side has all the problems. **Board 8** may seek to redress the balance.

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Board 8 shows it is possible to catch the opening bidder for a juicy penalty.

In summary from this morning:

We deal with opponents' opening bids (1level or 2/3level pre-empts) in a very similar way.

Over the preemptive bids we may have to be a little inventive – the lack of bidding space will bring our imagination into focus.

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