

Introduction to bridge

Lesson 7: Bidding with weak hands

Lesson 7 looks at opening the bidding or overcalling on weak hands with a long suit.

Why bid on weak hands with a long suit?

When you have less than opening strength and a single suited hand, it pays to get into the bidding as soon as possible and as high as possible. These **pre-emptive** bids are designed to disrupt the opponents and to describe your hand to your partner in one bid.

The aim of opening these weak hands at the two, three or four level is to deprive the opponents of the bidding space they need to find their best contract or to steal the hand.

Even though you have a weak hand, your security is your long suit.

Weak twos

Opening 2 ♦, 2 ♥ or 2 ♠ shows 6-9 HCP and a **good six card** suit (a 2 ♣ opening is reserved for a strong gaming forcing hand). We call these bids **weak twos**.

You could open a weak 2 with a hand like this:

KQ10852
4
A93
982

To open a weak two you should have at least two honours in the suit and preferably three. Always consider your vulnerability when opening a weak two. At 'favourable vulnerability' you can open a weak two with a poorer suit quality, particularly if your suit is spades.

Generally, **DO NOT** open with a weak two when:

- You have a decent 10 HCP or a void (unless partner has already passed) - this is too good for a weak two and you may miss a game contract.
- You have a 4-card major unless your partner has already passed (you may miss a major suit game).

Weak twos in third seat

If your partner has already passed, it is unlikely that you have enough for game, so you can open with a weak two with up to 11 or 12 HCP.

Responding to weak twos

- If you have a misfit and less than 16HCP (a singleton or void in partner's suit is not uncommon!), PASS – **don't try to rescue partner!**
- If you have support for partner's suit, further pre-empt by **bidding to the level of your trumps** – with a 9-card fit raise to 3, with 10-card fit raise to 4. Partner must then pass.

- If you have the points for game in partner's suit or in NT, bid game – you need about **17HCP to bid game**. (Be careful bidding 3NT with a singleton in partner's suit!)
- With **14-16TP, bid 2NT to invite game**. Partner rebids their suit to show a minimum (6-7HCP) and bids a side honour to show a maximum (8-9HCP).
- **Change suit to show a five-card suit and 16+HCP** - this is forcing but the weak two opener can just rebid their suit if they don't have support for partner's five-card suit.

Weak 3, 4 and 5 level pre-empts

Opening at the 3 level shows a weak hand with a good **seven card suit**.

Opening at the 4 level shows a weak hand with a good **eight card suit**.

Opening at the 5 level shows a highly distributional hand with a **long strong minor suit**.

For example, you would open this hand 3♠:

KQJ10875
8
94
K75

When deciding whether to open with a pre-empt:

- Count your playing tricks
- Take your vulnerability into account
- Look at your position at the table – first and third seats are best.

If you are not vulnerable you should have six playing tricks. If you are vulnerable you should have seven.

You can be more aggressive if they are vulnerable and your side is not.

Responding to a 3 level pre-empt

Raising partner's suit:

- Count your playing tricks
- If your side is not vulnerable, you need four tricks to raise partner's suit (partner should have 6 tricks). If vulnerable you need three (partner should have seven)
- You can also raise partner's suit with a weak hand and three-card trump support.

With a good hand, bid a five-card suit of your own - forcing.

When you pre-empt, **DON'T bid again** unless your partner forces you to!

Weak jump overcalls

You can also use a weak 2, 3 and 4 bids as an overcall after your opponents have opened the bidding.

For example, if your opponents open (1♣), a 2♥ bid by you would show a weak hand with 6-9HCP and a six-card heart suit.

The responses are the same as when you open the bidding with a weak pre-empt; further pre-empt, bid game in partner's suit or invite to game.