

The Bridge Booklet

(BB02)

Competitive Bidding



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Pre-Emptive Bidding

The pre-emptive bid was introduced to take advantage of hands that had good trick taking potential but were too weak to open by point count alone.

These bids make it difficult for opponents to either enter the bidding and/or to find their best contract.

The guidelines for Pre-Emptive opening bids are:

- At the 4-level A long suit Usually 8 or more cards headed by 2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 cards. These hands are rare - use your judgment!
- At the 3-level A long suit Usually 7 or more cards headed by 2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 honours
 A weak hand Less than the values for an opening bid at the one level
- At the 2-level A 6-card suit Usually with 2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 honours
 5-11HCPs Less than the values for an opening bid at the 1-level

Responding to a 3-Level Pre-emptive Opening:

Responder has four choices

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| Pass | If responder doesn't have 3 or more trump it is usually best to pass |
| Raise the openers suit | If responder has some trump support and enough strength/playing tricks (usually 3 or more), he can raise to game

If the combined strength is so weak that it is likely the opponents can make a game or even slam contract |
| Bid a new suit | If responder can determine How High and Where, he can bid the appropriate contract.

If responder is unsure of How High or Where he can make a forcing bid of a new suit to get more information. Opener must bid again. |
| Bid NoTrump | This is so rare as to almost never happen |

Notes

Run suits from the top down (does not apply to the trump suit)

Trump/ruff with the highest card you can afford

Generally, don't lead an Ace if you see the King in dummy. Ace's are usually poor opening leads unless they are the top-of-a sequence.

Don't pre-empt with outside Aces

Don't pre-empt with a second long suit (4 or more-especially if it is a major)

Develop your extra tricks early-don't be afraid to lose a trick to do this.

When you don't think the contract belongs to your side, strive to compete to the level of the combined number of trumps held by your partnership.

is less chance your side is headed for a game contract. A redouble by responder says "Partner, I have 10+ points and I think the contract belongs to our side."

Advancing an Overcall if Partner Bids: (When partner makes an overcall and responder bids or doubles, there won't usually be much effect on your call. Partner's overcall isn't forcing so you don't have to bid. However, the overcall invited you to into the auction, so you should be willing to compete.

Advancing a Takeout Double if Responder Bids: When partner makes a takeout double, you are in a different situation than when partner overcalls. If the opponent on your right passes, you are expected to bid something.

Things change when the opponent on your right bids after your partner's takeout double. You are no longer forced to bid. However the takeout double has invited you into the auction, so you want to compete whenever possible.

Opener's Action in a Competitive Auction: After you open the bidding, the auction can proceed in many ways, especially if the opponent on your left overcalls. Your partner; the responder, might make a negative double or a cuebid, and you must choose an appropriate rebid. As opener, you can also make use of competitive calls such as the double.

Action After Making an Overcall or Takeout Double: when you make an overcall or a takeout double, it is usually up to your partner; the advancer, to decide How High to compete. However you may need to act again with extra strength or distribution or if Advancer makes a forcing bid.

The Penalty Double: The penalty double prevents the opponents from frivolously bidding too high to prevent you from buying the contract.

It is risky to double the opponents in a part-score contract unless you are certain you can defeat them. If they make their part-score, their trick score is doubled and if the total is 100 or more points, they get their game bonus.

- Doubles of the opponent's 1NT or 2NT opening bids are for penalty
- Doubles of the opponents bids at the game level or higher are for penalty

Responding to a 2-Level Pre-Emptive Opening

Responder again has four choices

Pass	Without support for partners suit it is best to pass unless responder has enough strength that a game contract is a possibility (<i>count the playing tricks</i>)
Raise the opener's suit	Responder has enough strength that a game contract is likely Responder has so little strength that it is likely the opponents can make a game or even a slam contract. With a fit for partners suit responder might want to raise to make it more challenging for opponents to reach their best contract.
Bid a new suit	If responder is unsure of How High or Where the contract belongs, he needs to make a forcing bid to get more information. A response in a new suit is forcing and promises a 5-card or longer suit. Opener can raise with support or rebid his original suit without support.
The special 2NT bid	This is a conventional bid. It asks opener for a further description of their hand. It is used only when responder can imagine a game if opener has a 'good' Weak 2 bid. With a minimum Weak 2 bid of 5-8 points opener rebids the suit at the 3-level. With more than a minimum opener can bid a new suit to show a feature such as an Ace or King, or bid 3NT with a solid suit but no outside feature

Overcalls and Advances

When both sides are bidding for a contract, there is a competitive auction.

When the opponents begin the bidding they are referred to as the Opener and the Responder.

If your side then enters the auction you are referred to as the Overcaller and the Advancer.

The advantages of an overcall are:

- it takes up room on the bidding ladder making it more difficult for opponents to find their best contract
- if opponents win the auction your overcall may help partner find the best defence by suggesting an opening lead-the overcalled suit.

Guidelines for an Overcall

For a Simple Overcall

Distribution: a good 5-card suit or a 6-card or longer suit headed by 2 of the top 3 or 3 of the top 5 honours

Strength: 7 to 17 points at the 1-level
13 to 17 points at the 2-level

For a 1NT Overcall

Distribution: a balanced hand

Strength: 15-18 points and some strength in opponents suit

For a Preemptive Jump Overcall

Distribution: a good 6-card suit at the 2-level
a good 7-card suit at the 3-level

Strength: a weak hand

The Competitive Auction

Responder's action after an overcall: Sometimes an overcall won't affect the bid Responder was planning to make; sometimes only a minor adjustment will be needed; and sometimes there will be a large impact and responder must consider other options.

The Other Options may be any of:

Responder's Preemptive Jump Raise: when Right-hand Opponent overcalls and responder has 4-card or longer support for opener's suit but a weak hand of 6 to 9 points, make a preemptive bid:

4-card support: jump to the 3-level

5-card support: jump to the game level

Responder's Cuebid: since opponents overcall shows a good 5-card or longer suit, responder isn't going to suggest the opponents suit as trump. So responder can use a bid of the opponents suit (a cuebid) as an artificial forcing bid.

Responder's cuebid is forcing and shows

- Support for partners suit, three cards or more
- At least invitational strength (11+ points)

Responder's Negative Double: if responder doubles the overcaller it is called a Negative Double. The bid shows support for all unbid suits and enough strength to compete.

Responder's Negative Double shows:

- Support (ideally 4-cards or more) for both unbid suits
- Enough strength to compete (The strength is dependant on the level the opener will be forced to bid. If there is room for opener to bid one of responders suits at the one or 2-level responder needs 6 or more points. If opener may have to bid at the 3-level, responder needs 9 or more points. If opener may have to bid at the 4-level, responder will need 11 or more points)

Responder's Action after a Takeout Double:

Redouble: When your right-hand opponent doubles partner's opening bid, it shows the equivalent of an opening bid. Thus there

Advancer's Forcing Bid

When Advancer needs more information to decide How High and Where to play, a cuebid of the opponents suit is forcing!

Rebids by the Takeout Doubler

The takeout double promises at least 13 points but it could be a much stronger hand. The takeout doubler's strength will fall into one of three ranges:

Minimum	13-16 points	(13-15 points)
Medium	17-18 points	(16-18 points)
Maximum	19+ points	(19+ points)

Advancer's bid will also fall into one of three ranges:

Minimum (a bid at the cheapest level)	0-8 points
Medium (an invitational jump)	9-11 points
Maximum (a jump to game or cuebid)	12+ points

After making a takeout double, combine these two pieces of information to decide whether you should bid again.

Advancing a Simple Overcall

Advancer's Priority's

- 0-5 points: Pass
- With no support for partner's suit and no other good suit to show: Pass

1st Priority: Supporting Partner's Suit

With minimum values (6-9 points) and support for partners suit, raise.

- 3-card support-raise to the 2 level
- 4-card support-raise to the 3-level
- 5-card support-raise to the game level
- with 10+ Points-Cuebid the opponents suit showing interest in game

A Cuebid is a bid of the opponents suit and it is only available in a competitive auction. The Advancer uses this bid to show a hand with support and interest in reaching a game contract, about 10 or more points.

The Cuebid is forcing and the Overcaller is expected to bid again if the Opener passes.

2nd Priority: Bid a new Suit

Without support for partner's suit Advancer can consider bidding a new suit. The requirements are:

- a good 5-card suit or a 6-card or longer suit
- 6 or more points at the 1-level
- 11 or more points at the 2-level

A new suit Response to an opening bid is forcing.

An Advance to a new suit is not forcing.

3rd Priority: NoTrump

With a balanced hand and some strength in opponent's suit, the Advancer can bid NoTrump.

- 6 to 10 points: bid NoTrump at the cheapest level
- 11 to 12 points: jump in NoTrump
- 13+ points: Cuebid and then bid NoTrump

Responding to an Advance of an Overcall

If Advancer raises the overcalled suit, bids a new suit, or bids NoTrump it is not forcing.

If Advancer cuebids the Overcaller must bid again. With nothing extra, the Overcaller rebids the suit at the cheapest level. With extra values the Overcaller can bid a new suit, jump in the overcalled suit, or bid NoTrump.

Rebids by the Overcaller after a Minimum Raise

The Overcaller will usually pass a simple raise. However he may bid again with extra strength if it is possible there is enough combined strength for a game.

Rebids by the Overcaller after a New Suit Advance

The new suit response is invitational but not forcing! With extra strength or distribution the Overcaller can bid again.

Rebids by the Overcaller after a NoTrump Advance

Advancer's response in NoTrump is not forcing. With a minimum hand, the Overcaller can pass. With extra strength or distribution, the Overcaller bids again.

Rebids by the Overcaller after a Cuebid

Advancer's cuebid is forcing, showing interest in reaching game and asking for more information about the Overcallers hand. Depending on the Overcaller's strength, rebid as follows:

Minimum	Overcaller bids as cheaply as possible.
Medium	Overcaller makes a forward going bid; a new suit or a jump in the original suit
Maximum	Overcaller takes the partnership to game.

Takeout Doubles and Advances

This bid is used when the Opponents bid first and you would like to compete for the contract. The doublers hand might be something like:

♠ AJ84 ♥ K1032 ♦ 8 ♣ KQ87

With Opponents opening 1♦ you would like to compete in the auction preferring any trump suit other than Diamonds. However the hand does not meet the requirements for an overcall: it has no 5-card or longer suit. The double can be used to solve this dilemma.

The takeout double is forcing and tells partner "I have enough strength to compete for the contract. I want you to choose the suit."

The bid requires the same strength needed to open the bidding but since you are asking partner to pick the suit and your hand will be dummy if you win the auction, count Dummy Points instead of Length Points.

Guidelines

- Support (at least 3-card and preferably 4-card) for the unbid suits
- 13 or more total points counting HCPs and Dummy Points

The takeout double can be used after both opponents have bid. You are still asking partner to pick a trump suit other than the suit(s) bid by the opponents.

Advancing a Takeout Double

When partner makes a takeout double, you are being asked to pick a trump suit. You may not pass! You must bid even with no points.

Use the following guidelines:

- 0-8 points: bid at the cheapest level
- 9-11 points: make an invitational bid by jumping one level
- 12+ points: get to game

Advancing in NoTrump: with strength in Opponent's suit and no better option, bid NoTrump

- 6-10 points: bid NoTrump at the cheapest level
- 11-12 points: bid NoTrump jumping a level
- 13+ points: bid game in NoTrump