

Bidding Judgment

Some Guidelines for Third-
Seat Opening Bids

Marty Says

- What you should be thinking about.
 - ❑ First decision-whether or not to bid.
 - ❑ Second decision-what to bid.

In Deciding Whether or Not to Bid, Marty Says...

- Be aggressive in third seat.
- With a weak hand and a long suit it is an ideal time for a preempt.
- Vulnerability is a factor, but don't let it cause you to "quake with fear".
- Make an effort not to pass.

With Balanced Distribution

- Open with 9+ points when not vulnerable.
- Open with 11+ points when vulnerable.
- Partner knows you might be weak, so she will bid accordingly.
- When you have a regular opening hand you must show it to partner, but know partner has less than 12 points.

When You Have a Weak Hand and a Long Suit

- Know that LHO has a pretty good hand.
- Your job – within reason – is to make life as difficult as possible as you can for him.

Bergen's Rule of 24

- In third seat, after two passes...
- Estimate 8 points each for the two passed hands.
- That leaves 24 points, between you and the 4th seat.
- Subtract your points from 24 and you have a good estimate of what your LHO has.

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 1

♠ 4

♥ 10 9 7 3

♦ K Q J 6 5

♣ 7 4 3

- Using Marty's rule of 24, you estimate LHO has 18 points.
- You know LHO will bid something and their side will take the contract.
- You can help partner make the best opening lead.
- Bid 2 ♦.

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 2

♠ 4

♥ K Q J 9 7 5 3

♦ J 10 6 5

♣ 3

- Using Marty's rule of 24, you estimate LHO has 17 points.
- Opponents likely have a cold 4 ♠.
- Normally, opening 4 with a 7-card suit is bad bridge, but not here.
- Bid 4 ♥.

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 3

♠ J 10 8 6 5 4 2

♥ 10 7 3

♦ 6 5

♣ 3

- Using Marty's rule of 24, you estimate LHO has 23 points.
- You expect LHO is about to open 2 ♣.
- They very likely have a slam.
- Bid 3 ♠.

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 4

♠ J 10 8 6 5 4 2

♥ Q J 3

♦ K J

♣ Q

- You have 10 points. LHO should have about 14
- This is probably a partscore hand.
- Any 3 level bid is likely to go down.
- Bid 2 ♠.

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 5

♠ 5 4 2

♥ 3

♦ K 7 4

♣ K 10 9 8 5 3

- You have 6 points. LHO should have about 18
- They have a spade or heart fit.
- Almost certainly have game.
- If your suit was a major, you would open 2.
- Partner has about 8 points.
- Bid 3 ♣.

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	3 ♣	double
5 ♣	pass	pass	double
All Pass			

♠ A K Q 8 6
 ♥ A Q J 7
 ♦ J 10 9
 ♣ 7

♠ 3
 ♥ 10 6 5 4 3
 ♦ A 8 7
 ♣ A J 4 2

♠ J 10 9 7
 ♥ K 9 8
 ♦ Q 9 6 5
 ♣ Q 6

♠ 5 4 2
 ♥ 3
 ♦ K 7 4
 ♣ K 10 9 8 5 3

Okay, those were some weird hands.
Now let's look at some more or less
normal hands.

We're still using Marty's rule of 24.

Remember the thought process we
have been discussing:

- First decision-whether or not to bid
- Second decision-what to bid

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 6

♠ J 10

♥ K J 3

♦ K 10 7 2

♣ J 8 5 2

- You have 9 points. LHO should have about 15.
- Marty says open 9 points when not vulnerable.
- Here you have 9 relatively bad points and no suit you want partner to lead.
- No good reason to open this hand, probably best to Pass.

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 7

♠ Q J 2

♥ K Q 4

♦ 9 7 4 2

♣ Q J 6

- You have 11 points. LHO should have about 14.
- You have enough points to open.
- You don't have a suit you want partner to lead.
- Yuck 4-3-3-3 distribution.
- This is probably a partscore hand.
- Too many quacks.
- Best to Pass!

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 9

♠ A 10 9

♥ 9 8 7 3

♦ A J 10 7

♣ 5 2

- You have 9 points. LHO should have about 15.
- A much better 9 points.
- 2 Quick tricks
- Nice middle cards.
- Offers partner a good opening lead.
- Open 1 ♦.

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 8

♠ A K 10 9

♥ 7 3

♦ 9 7 3 2

♣ K 10 9

- You have 10 points. LHO should have about 14.
- Enough for 3rd seat opening bid.
- You really don't want partner to lead diamonds.
- You want a spade lead.
- With this hand 3rd seat, open 1 ♠.

You're In Third Seat-Non Vulnerable: Pass...Pass...??

Hand 10

♠ 8

♥ 9 7 6 4 3

♦ A K J 10 8

♣ J 2

- You have 9 points. LHO should have about 15.
- 5-5 come alive.
- Normally you would open your higher-ranking suit. Not here!
- Likely your LHO will declare in spades or no trump...
- You don't want a heart lead.
- You can open 1 ♦.
- But you should give a lot of thought to 2 ♦!

Final Thoughts

- We're dealing with judgment, in this lesson.
- It won't always work out perfectly for you.
- Follow the guidelines we have discussed.
- Use common sense.
- And most of time you'll come out ahead.