

Responding To Preempts IV - Bidding a New Suit

Sometimes when our partner preempts we have a very good hand with a suit of our. For instance my partner recently held ♠Kxxxx ♥x ♦AKQxxxx ♣ - and the auction went P-3C-3H to him. What would you bid?

What would you bid if RHO had passed?

Bidding a new suit when your partner has preempted is forcing and thus shows a good hand. Since partner is forced to bid, you should be willing to play either their suit at the next higher level or your suit at the next higher level.

Bidding a new suit with a fit for partner is almost always when your suit is a major and their suit is a minor. At the 2 level it shows a good 5 card suit. Partner should usually only raise with 3 card support, but if they have a high honor doubleton and a reason they can also support.

At the 3 level you often have a 6 card suit because partner has suggested more length in their suit and is therefore less likely to have 3 card support for your suit. You should expect your partner to routinely raise you with 2 card support when you bid a new suit at the 3 level.

So how many tricks can you expect from partner when you are bidding your suit?

With a 3 card fit you can expect 2 to 3 tricks when partner. Expect more when vulnerable and less when not vulnerable.

This implies that if you can take 6 or 7 tricks in your hand you should try to bid a suit of your own at the 2 level. However, you do need to make sure that you are willing to play 3 of partner's suit without a fit.

E.g. ♠KQxxx ♥xx ♦KJx ♣ AQx. You are willing to play 3D if partner doesn't have a fit for your spades but are interested in 4S if partner does have a fit there. With no heart stopper you are less interested in 3N then you might have been.

You might also have a hand that doesn't need a fit in order to believe that your suit is better than partner's.

E.g. ♠KQJT874 ♥x ♦AKx ♣ xx

When your partner open 2H you want no part of that. You know that your spade suit isn't going to help much with hearts as trump and you are willing to play 3S even if partner doesn't have a fit. Start with 2S and rebid 3S if partner doesn't support you.

Do not rescue partner until they are doubled.

E.g. ♠KQJT874 ♥x ♦xxx ♣ xx

When partner opens 3H, do not immediately bid 3S. Instead pass and then if the opponents double 3H and leave it it then pull to 3S. By passing first you have denied having a strong hand.

Lastly, she who knows goes. A jump to game in a new suit is to play. This is usually based on length not HCP and has no slam interest.

E.g. ♠AKQT876 ♥x ♦AKx ♣ xx

If partner opens 2H or 3H, just bid 4S. You don't want to have a conversation, you just want to play game in spades.

NOTE: When partner opens 2S, jumping to 4H is fraught with danger. Partner's instincts will be to treat this as a singleton with spade support. I highly recommend simply never making this bid without firm partnership understandings. Instead if you want to play hearts at the 4 level, bid 3H and then rebid 4H.