

Preempts

When I started playing bridge I took the parameters of the bid to be the meaning of it. So when I had a balanced hand with 15-17 HCP I opened 1N. That was the definition and the meaning. Weak 2's are typically defined as 5-10 HCP and 6 cards in the suit. That covers a lot of ground. For instance

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|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. ♠ 765432 | 2. ♠ 765432 | 3. ♠ KQJ654 | 4. ♠ Q65432 |
| ♥ KQ | ♥ KQ87 | ♥ 3 | ♥ Q4 |
| ♦ A4 | ♦ A3 | ♦ 42 | ♦ J32 |
| ♣ 432 | ♣ 4 | ♣ A432 | ♣ Q2 |

All 4 of these hands meet that definition, but none of them should be opened 2S. The idea of a preempt is to capture the times when you have trick taking ability that is dependent on making your long suit trump. Rephrasing that leads us to the following statement:

I will take a lot of tricks if this suit is trump **and** I will not take many tricks if this suit is not trump.

Which is all well and good, but what is "a lot of tricks" and what is "not many"?

To put some teeth into the above statement let's give our preempts a trick taking strength rather than a hcp range.

Level	Not Vul	Vul
2	4-5	5-6
3	5-6	6-7
4	6-7	7-8

A good preempt takes the high end of that range and a bad preempt takes the low end of that range.

A good adjustment is to add half a trick for preempting in 2nd seat, since there's a much higher likelihood of preempting partner there.

When estimating the # of tricks that you are going to take, it's a good idea to think about what length you expect the longest opponent to have.

Length in your hand	Longest suit in the other 3 hands			
	2	3	4	5+
6	0%	55%	36%	8%
7	15%	63%	21%	3%
8	41%	48%	10%	1%

Defensive Tricks

A possible defensive trick is simply one that you might take on defence. Often this is the same as an offensive trick. For instance an ace is likely to take a trick on offence or defense. Holdings such as Qx take tricks all the time when the opponents have to guess who has the queen. But rarely take tricks when you are declarer without a lot of support in partner's hand.

With that in mind let's say that 3 defensive tricks is too much for a preempt. That means that you can have at most 2 defensive tricks. Furthermore let's say that when you have 2 defensive tricks, at least one of them should be in your preempt suit. Otherwise you have a lot more defense than your partner can expect and they might take an unfortunate sacrifice.