

Pre-empts

The perceived wisdom is that pre-emptive bids make life difficult for opponents, but they can cause partner problems also.

Do you have an agreement on the quality of a pre-empt bid? Does this change for weak jump overcalls? Do you play weak jump shifts? Do you play weak 2 opening bids?

All four tell a story, both to partner and the opposition. I suggest that it is most important that partner has a fair idea of the quality of your bid. It is much easier to determine the final contract and decide whether to sacrifice.

Weak twos can be wide ranging. The main aim is to tell partner that you have a six-card suit and a general point range. They don't pre-empt partner, because most will have a 2NT response in their system to obtain further information.

Weak jump shifts eg 1♣ - P - 2♠ tell a specific story – a six card suit but not good enough to respond 1♠.

Say 0-4 pts, 4th in hand has a tricky decision. Opener is unlimited, coming in at the three level can be dangerous especially vulnerable.

Opening pre-empts nowadays can be wide ranging.

Take Board 2

♠ K4

♥ KQJ10954

♦ Q94

♣ 3

Is this a pre-empt first in hand? For most it would be too good, 11 points and a good suit. A 1♥ opener but think about it. It is likely that the opposition have a fit in spades and or clubs. It would be a good idea to take their space away, so bid 4♥. In this instance it has the bonus of making and if the opposition venture 5♣ vulnerable, best defence puts it two off, vulnerable and doubled scores 500.

I believe it is important to convey as much information as possible to partner. That is why we have an agreement to play constructive pre-empts in 1st & 2nd positions. We need a seven-card suit, two out of the top three honours and an outside Q or better.

With a suitable hand partner can count to nine tricks in NT or ten in a major.

Without this quality, you can open a weak two even with a poor seven-card suit.

All these bids are worth a conversation with partner.