



Adventures in Bridge

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Preempts

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Introduction – “General Ideas”

Preempting the bidding is a matter of partnership style and partnership agreement. There is no *right* or *wrong* answer to your preempting style (within reason, of course.) The most important thing is for you and your partner to be on the same page about what you expect from a preemptive opening bid. Having said that, preempts have evolved a lot over the years!

Philosophy – “Why Do We Preempt?”

- **The Old Reason** - Offensive Bidding (“Picture Bids!”) – Hand with lots tricks without many HCP. 1-level opening bids used to promise more HCP than the modern style.
- **Modern Reason** – Defensive Bidding (Attack Opponents, better answer!)

Thinking - “What Should We Consider When Deciding to Preempt?”

If our goal is to preempt the bidding (open a weak-two) as often as possible, then we need to figure out what we need to take into account in order to help us make good decisions about when to do this.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is important because it determines how many tricks we can go down.

There are 4 Types of Vulnerability!

- *White vs. Red (Favorable)* – Most aggressive!
- *All White* – Second most aggressive.
- *All Red* – Third most aggressive.
- *Red vs. White (Unfavorable)* – Most conservative.

Position – What Seat Are You in?

The position that we are in is another important factor to consider when deciding whether to preempt or not. Let’s try to understand how our thinking should change in different seats around the table.

- *First Seat (Dealer)* – Most Aggressive.
- *Second Seat* – Most Conservative.
- *Third Seat* – Most Varied.
- *Fourth Seat* - In the 4th seat we do not preempt. To Play.

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Opponents – Whom Are You Playing Against?

- Mix it up against players who are stronger than you!

Scoring Type – Matchpoints vs. IMPs

- Matchpoints – more tactics and -200 “Death Score.”
- IMPs – Don’t lose the entire match in one board.

Suit – “What Does a Good Preempt Suit Look Like?”

Stay out of Danger – Spot Cards / Body Cards

- AKxxx opposite x -- usually 2 losers.
- QJT9xx opposite x -- usually 2 losers.

A few other examples of good suits:

- AJT9xx
- KJT9xx
- KQT9xx
- QT98xx
- JT98xx

These suits all are going to play pretty well and we will usually not get into too much trouble if we preempt with these kinds of suits.

Evens vs. Odds

- (Your Hand) AQT864 vs. (LHO Hand) KJ9753
- (Your Hand) KJ9753 vs. (LHO Hand) AQT864

Hand – “Preempt More or Less?”

Think about overall quality of our hand, not just quality of our suit. Consider the following:

- HCP,
- Location of honors,
- Suit Quality (spot cards),
- Shape of hand.

Balanced hands are the worst for preempting. These hands are similar to the horrible 4333s we all hate:

- 5332 (vs. 5431)
- 6322 (vs. 6421)
- 7222 (vs. 7321 vs. 7420)

Preempt one level more with shapely hands with good suits:

- Open a weak-two with 5431 shape – consider tactics and “modern” risk/reward for preempts.
- Open a 3-level preempt with 64 hands.
- Open a 4-level preempt with 74 hands.
- With 7222 shape, we often “preempt one less.”