

Bidding Over an Opponent's Opening **Pre-emptive Bid**

Pressure and Uncertainty Created by an Opening Preempt

The bidding advantage definitely favors the pre-empting side. The preemptor holds a well-defined hand, and his/her Partner, as the "Captain," has nearly perfect knowledge of their combined assets.

Entering the auction at the 3-level or higher is always a risky business. Over an Opponent's pre-empt you have little information to guide your way and not much room to explore. Because of these risks it always requires a few extra points to make a call directly over a preemptive bid, compared to what a similar call would have shown at the 1-level.

General Requirements for Bidding Over a Pre-empt

Overcalls: An overcall, in the direct (2nd) seat of a pre-emptive 2-level bid requires opening count and at least a good 5-card suit. An overcall of a 3-level pre-empt typically describes a hand with 15 or more high-card points and a good 6-card or longer suit (a few more points are necessary with only a 5-card suit). The Responder will raise Partner with three or more cards in support (perhaps even two), and as few as eight or nine high-card points.

Take-Out Doubles: A takeout double of a 3-level pre-empt typically promises support for the unbid suits and at least 16 points. The Responder answers according to the count:

- a) With 0-8 high-card points, simply choose an un-bid suit.
- b) With 9-12 high-card points, make a jump choice.
- c) With 13 or more high-card points, cue-bid the Opponent's suit.

Competitive Calls at the 4-Level or Higher: Competitive bids at this level imply even greater strength, not so much in terms of high-card points but rather in trick-taking capacity. *All competitive calls* after a pre-emptive opening bid are made under pressure. Thus, the values they promise might not always be identical with the values they deliver.

Game-Level Bids

A bid of **3-NT** over a 3-level pre-empt indicates a balanced or semi-balanced hand with stoppers in the Preemptor's suit and about 18-21 high-card points. Game-Level bids in a suit requires near game in hand and a self sufficient suit which satisfies the "Suit Quality Test".

If one of the Opponents pre-empts and the next two Players pass, it takes fewer points in balancing (4th) seat to make an overcall or double. Since Partner might have passed with up to 15 points, the object is to protect your side's interests, sometimes with as little as 10 or 11 high-card points.