

## 6: Responding to partner's preemptive bid

**Review:** a preemptive bid (2, 3, 4 or 5 level) shows a hand with less than opening values, and promises about three playing tricks less than the level of the preempt, assuming no help from partner. For example, a 3-level preempt should have about six playing tricks.

When considering how to respond to a preempt, Audrey Grant's *Better Bridge* suggests that you count tricks and trumps (rather than trying to count points). Assume that opener's hand will deliver three tricks less than his/her bid, and then estimate how many additional tricks your hand will provide. These additional tricks could be won in different ways:

- through honors that you have in the opener's suit
- As, AKs and KQs in side suits
- A running side suit
- Possible ruffs, if dummy has some trumps and a short side suit

If partner preempts at the 2-level in a major suit, you have enough bidding space to investigate game by raising (a non-forcing bid), or bidding a forcing, conventional 2NT, without committing to game. The 2NT response asks opener to show a feature (outside A or K) if opener has a good hand, in the 8-10 HCP range. If opener is in the 5-7 HCP range, opener simply returns to his long suit. After partner's weak 2-level opening, you can invite game with a non-forcing raise.

Normally, when you raise partner's preempt, you expect to make the contract. Sometimes, you raise out of weakness, simply to further disrupt opponents when you suspect they have game or slam going. A good guideline is to raise partner to the level of the total number of trumps held by the partnership. For example, if partner opens 3S and you have 3-card support with about 5HCP, raise to 4S (since you and partner have 10 spades between you).

After a preempt at any level, a new suit bid by responder below the level of game is usually considered forcing.

The opponents are vulnerable and you are not (this is sometimes called favorable vulnerability). Your partner deals and opens 2♠. Your right hand opponent passes. What is your bid? (Assume your partner has a 6-card suit and about five tricks.)

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| 1. ♠ 7<br>♥ KJ986<br>♦ KQ5<br>♣ AQ75 | 2. ♠ K6<br>♥ AQJ<br>♦ AJ53<br>♣ 8753 | 3. ♠ K842<br>♥ 63<br>♦ JT842<br>♣ J6 |
| 4. ♠ 76<br>♥ AQ86<br>♦ AKQ83<br>♣ K5 | 5. ♠ K96<br>♥ K63<br>♦ J53<br>♣ QJ92 |                                      |

At favorable vulnerability, your partner deals and opens 3♥. The next player passes. What is your bid? (Assume your partner has a 7-card suit and six tricks.)

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| 6. ♠ AK62<br>♥ 8<br>♦ KQ83<br>♣ AQ85 | 7. ♠ 765<br>♥ 986<br>♦ J3<br>♣ K8654  | 8. ♠ AKJT765<br>♥ 6<br>♦ KQ<br>♣ KQ5 |
| 9. ♠ AK764<br>♥ K86<br>♦ 3<br>♣ KT85 | 10. ♠ KQ962<br>♥ 63<br>♦ AJ7<br>♣ QJ9 |                                      |