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So far in our study of bidding technique we have been concerned solely with reaching our best contract. That is the proper objective when our side has most of the high cards, but when the position is reversed our aim must be to prevent the opponents from making the best of their cards. One way of achieving this is by opening with a bid of three or four in a suit. Such bids are not strong in high cards, but are based on long suits of seven or eight cards. They are known as pre-emptive or shut-out bids. The idea is to put up a barrage high enough to shut the opponents out of the auction, or at least to make it hard for them to reach their best contract.

—HUGH KELSEY, *START BRIDGE THE EASY WAY* (1976)

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# Preemptive Opening Bids

## The Concept of Preemptive Bids

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Compare these two hands:

1) ♠ 6	2) ♠ K Q J 10 9 8 7
♥ A K 7 4	♥ 5
♦ A K 8 3	♦ 9 5 2
♣ A K 8 6	♣ 7 3

At first glance, they seem to have little in common. The first hand has 21 *high-card points* (HCPs); the second, only 6 high-card points. The first is at the top of the range for an opening bid at the *one level*; the second doesn't have enough *strength* to open 1♠.

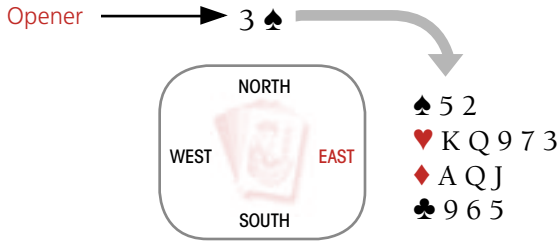
Yet they do have something in common. Both hands have 6 *playing tricks*—tricks the hand can be expected to take if the partnership buys the *contract*. The first hand can be expected to take six tricks through the power of the *high cards*: the ♥A-K, ♦A-K, and ♣A-K. The second hand can take six tricks if spades are trumps, through the power of the long, strong spade suit.

Since both hands can take 6 tricks, it seems clear that both should qualify for an opening bid. However, the first hand meets the requirements for an opening bid at the one level, but the second does not

since a 1♠ opening bid would describe a hand with about 13-21 points. To take advantage of hands that have a good, long suit but less than the values for an opening bid, the classic *preemptive opening bid* was introduced. With the second hand, opener would start with 3♠.

Why start the the bidding at the three level with a hand too weak to open at the one level? An opening bid in a suit at the three level describes a weak hand with the strength focused in one long suit and the potential to take about six tricks. The advantage of a preemptive opening bid is that it takes up a lot of room on the *Bidding Ladder* (see Appendix 3, on page 219) and makes it difficult for the opponents to get into the *auction* when they have the majority of the strength.

Consider East's dilemma if North opens 3♠:



With 12 high-card points plus 1 *length point* for the five-card heart suit, East was planning to open the bidding 1♥. After North opens 3♠, East is faced with a challenge. To bid hearts, East would have to start at the four level and bid 4♥. That might get the partnership much too high. If East passes, however, the partnership might miss a good contract. North's preemptive opening bid has made it more likely that East-West might bid too much or too little. It's for reasons such as this that preemptive bids have become an integral part of *competitive bidding*.

There are risks to making a preemptive bid. North's 3♠ opening makes it difficult for East to bid, but could also make it difficult for South, North's partner, to bid effectively. There is a danger North-South will be *defeated* in the 3♠ contract and will lose points to East-West. To understand how to balance the potential risks against the possible gains, it's necessary to consider the scoring.

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## Scoring

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The format of the game—*rubber bridge*, *duplicate*, *Chicago*—affects the way the game is scored. A more detailed explanation is given in Appendix 1 (page 213) but here is an overview. Two factors impact the score for making or defeating a contract:

- **Vulnerability**
- **Penalty Double**

### **Vulnerability**

In rubber bridge, a partnership that has not won a game is *non vulnerable* and a partnership that has won a game is *vulnerable*. In duplicate or Chicago scoring, the vulnerability is assigned on each *deal*.

The key point is that bonuses and penalties are higher when vulnerable than when non vulnerable.

### **Penalty Double**

The side that doesn't win the auction can *double* the contract if it feels *declarer* can't make the required number of tricks. This is referred to as a *penalty double*. Doubles are discussed in more detail later in the book, but the key point is that a penalty double dramatically affects the size of the penalty if the contract is defeated.

You score points in three ways:

- **Trick Score**
- **Bonus Points**
- **Penalty Points**

## Trick Score

The points for making a contract are calculated as follows:

- 20 points per trick bid and made in clubs or diamonds, the *minor* suits.
- 30 points per trick bid and made in hearts or spades, the *major* suits.
- 40 points for the first trick and 30 points for each subsequent trick in notrump.

If declarer makes a contract of 2♥, for example, the trick score is 60 points (30 + 30). A contract of 3NT is worth a trick score of 100 points (40 + 30 + 30).

*Game* is a total trick score of 100 or more points. Game can be scored in a single deal by bidding and making the following *game contracts*:

3NT (nine tricks)	$40 + 30 + 30 = 100$
4♥ or 4♠ (ten tricks)	$30 + 30 + 30 + 30 = 120$
5♣ or 5♦ (eleven tricks)	$20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20 = 100$

## Bonuses

The bonuses awarded depend on the format of the game. In duplicate bridge, for example, the bonuses for bidding and making contracts are:

- 300 for bidding and making a non vulnerable game contract.
- 500 for bidding and making a vulnerable game contract.
- 50 for bidding and making a partscore contract.

For bidding and making a non vulnerable 3NT contract, the partnership would receive a trick score of 100 (40 + 30 + 30) plus a game bonus of 300, for a total of 400. If the partnership is vulnerable, the trick score is 100 plus a game bonus of 500, for a total of 600.

Bonuses are discussed in more detail in Appendix 2, but a key point is that the **value of bidding and making a game is approximately 500 points.**

### Penalty Points

If declarer doesn't make the required number of tricks, the opponents receive points for each trick by which contract is defeated<sup>1</sup>. The penalty depends on the vulnerability and whether the contract is doubled.

If the contract is *undoubled* the penalty is:

- Non vulnerable: 50 points per trick.
- Vulnerable: 100 points per trick.

If the contract is doubled, the penalty is:

- Non vulnerable: 100 points for the first trick, 200 points for the second and third trick, and 300 points per trick thereafter.
- Vulnerable: 200 points for the first trick and 300 points per trick thereafter.

It is more costly to be defeated (*go down*), when vulnerable and the penalty rapidly increases if the contract is doubled, as can be seen from the following chart:

	Undoubled		Doubled	
	Non vulnerable	Vulnerable	Non vulnerable	Vulnerable
Down 1	50	100	100	200
Down 2	100 (50+50)	200 (100+100)	300 (100+200)	500 (200+300)
Down 3	150 (50+50+50)	300 (100+100+100)	500 (100+200+200)	800 (200+300+300)

Notice that the penalty for being defeated three tricks, doubled and non vulnerable or two tricks doubled and vulnerable is 500 points, about the value of bidding and making a game contract.

<sup>1</sup> The score for making a doubled contract is detailed in the Appendix.

## The Guideline of 500

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When you make a preemptive bid, you are expecting to be defeated in the contract if the opponents hold the majority of strength. The hope is that the penalty for being defeated will be less than the value of the potential contract the opponents could make.

Deliberately *overbidding* to a contract you don't expect to make is referred to as a *sacrifice*. You are hoping to sacrifice some scoring points to the opponents in exchange for the larger score they could get in their best contract.

Estimating the value of the opponents' potential contract is a challenge since it depends on whether the contract is in notrump, a major suit, or a minor suit, whether their side is vulnerable, and the scoring format (rubber, duplicate, Chicago). However, a useful guideline to keep in mind is **the value of making a game contract is approximately 500 points**.

When you are preempting to try to prevent the opponents from making a game contract, you don't want to get a penalty of more than 500 points since that is the approximate value of their game<sup>2</sup>. Since they can double for penalties, you don't want to overbid by more than two tricks vulnerable or three tricks non vulnerable. If you are defeated two tricks doubled and vulnerable, the penalty is 500 points (200 + 300); if you are defeated three tricks doubled and non vulnerable, the penalty is 500 points (100 + 200 + 200).

Although this is a guideline, it is often referred to as the *Rule of 500* or the *Rule of Two and Three*. In essence, it says that you need to be a little more cautious about preempting when your side is vulnerable.

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<sup>2</sup> If you occasionally lose 800 or more points on a given deal, you're in good company. The best players in the world have stories about being defeated for a large number.

### Three-Level Preemptive Opening Bids<sup>3</sup>

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Estimating the number of playing tricks a hand is worth and taking into account factors such as vulnerability can be quite challenging. So, most players use some straightforward guidelines for deciding when to make a preemptive opening bid.

For a preemptive opening bid in a suit at the three level, the guideline is:

#### Three-Level Preemptive Opening

An opening bid of 3♣, 3♦, 3♥, or 3♠ shows:

- A long suit      Usually seven or more cards with two of the top three or three of the top five cards in the suit.
- A weak hand      Less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.

A good seven-card suit translates into about 6 or 7 playing tricks if the contract is played with the long suit as the trump suit. Having most of the strength concentrated in the long suit makes it quite likely the opponents can make a game contract in one of the other suits or in notrump if partner can't provide more than one or two tricks.

A preemptive opening bid serves two purposes. It is an *obstructive bid*, designed to make it more difficult for the opponents to enter the bidding and find their best contract. It is also quite descriptive, helping *responder* decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.

<sup>3</sup>Preemptive opening bids can also be made at the four level or higher, typically with an eight-card or longer suit.



## Examples

The following hands meet the requirements for a three-level preemptive opening:

♠ K Q J 10 9 8 7    3♠. There are only 6 high-card points plus three length points, not enough to open 1♠.  
♥ 6  
♦ 8 5 2    The seven-card spade suit is strong with four of the top five *honors*. The hand has 6 playing tricks—the only spade trick the opponents can take is the ♠A.  
♣ 7 3

♠ 6    3♥. The heart suit isn't quite as good but there are three of the top five honors. With only 7 high-card points plus 3 length points for the seven-card suit, there is not enough strength to open 1♥. 3♥ describes the hand well and will make the auction more challenging for the opponents if they have the majority of the strength.  
♥ A Q J 9 8 7 4  
♦ 8 3  
♣ 9 4 2

The playing strength is more of a challenge to estimate but there are probably still at least six tricks with hearts as trumps. The opponents are likely to take only the ♥K, or they may take no heart tricks if partner has the ♥K or if the ♥K can be trapped.

♠ 8 6    3♦. This hand barely qualifies for a preemptive opening. Although the diamond suit has three of the top five honors, there are only 5 high-card points, putting this on the low end of the scale. It's possible the opponents could win the ♦A and ♦Q, so there could be only five playing tricks.  
♥ 4  
♦ K J 10 9 8 7 3  
♣ J 10 5

It is with a borderline hand like this that you might want to consider the vulnerability when deciding whether to open 3♦. If your side is non vulnerable, you would probably choose to open 3♦ since the

penalty is not as large if you are doubled. If your side is vulnerable, you might choose to be more cautious and pass, since the penalty for being defeated is larger, especially if the contract is doubled for penalty.

The following hands would not meet the requirements for a preemptive opening bid at the three level.

♠ J 8 7 6 4 3 2    Pass. The quality of the seven-card suit isn't  
♥ K J 5            good enough for a three-level opening bid.  
♦ A 7              There is no guarantee of taking more than  
♣ 6                three or four tricks with spades as the trump  
                      suit. This hand illustrates the importance of  
                      having a good suit for a preemptive opening.  
                      With only 9 high-card points, there isn't  
                      enough strength to open at the one level.

♠ 4                1♥. With a good seven-card suit and 12 high-  
♥ A K J 9 8 5 3    card points plus 3 length points for the seven-  
♦ 7 3              card suit, there is enough strength to make  
♣ K J 5            an opening bid at the one level. Preemptive  
                      opening bids describe hands unsuitable for an  
                      opening bid at the one level.

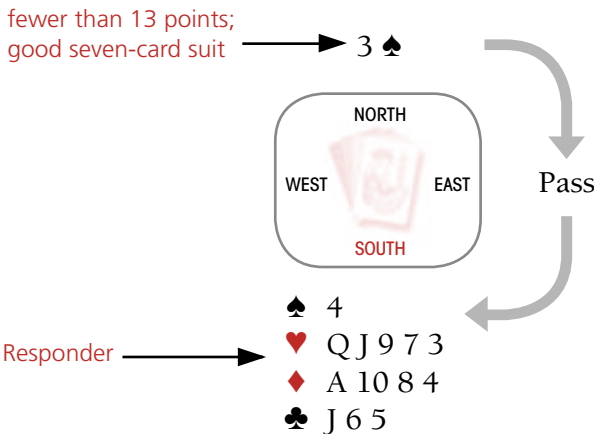
## Responding to Three-Level Preemptive Opening Bids

An opening preemptive bid at the three level is very descriptive: a good seven-card suit but fewer than 13 points. Opener has five or six playing tricks in the trump suit. Responder can use this information to decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.

Responder's decision focuses on playing tricks, rather than high-card points. Sometimes responder can immediately choose the contract. At other times, more information is needed. After a preemptive opening bid, responder can pass, *raise* opener's suit, bid a *new suit*, or bid notrump. Let's look at each in turn.

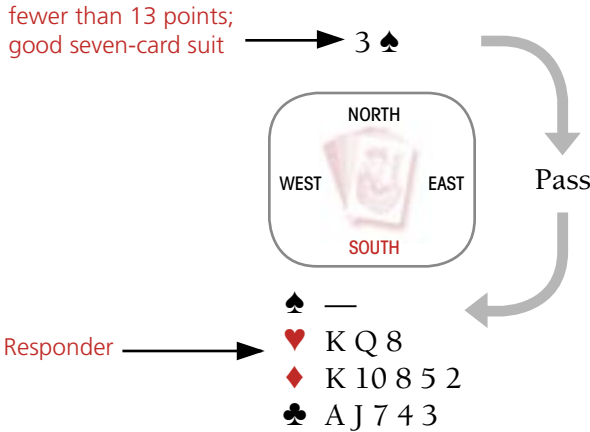
### Pass

When opener starts with a preemptive bid, opener is hoping partner, the responder, has at least two cards in the trump suit. If responder doesn't have three or more trumps, it is usually best to pass unless responder can picture enough tricks for a game contract. For example, suppose North opens the bidding 3♠ and East passes. It's South's *call*.



Pass. South doesn't like North's choice of spades as the trump suit, but bidding will only get the partnership higher on the Bidding

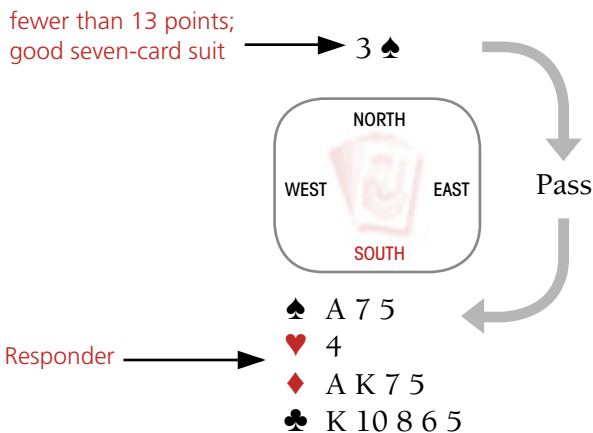
Ladder. North's spades will be longer and stronger than South's hearts. Since South can contribute only one *sure trick*, the  $\heartsuit A$ , South should pass and leave North to try to take nine tricks with spades as trumps.



Pass. North probably has no more than six playing tricks and South, even with 13 high-card points plus 1 point for the length in diamonds and 1 point for the length in clubs, can't contribute enough tricks to make a game contract. Don't consider playing in notrump with no *fit* for partner's suit. North will get several tricks with spades as the trump suit, but may be unable to provide a single trick in a notrump contract. There may be no way to reach North's hand.

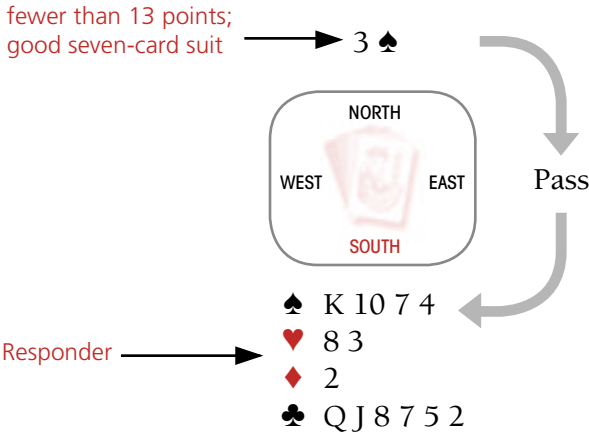
## Raising the Preemptive Opening

There are two quite different reasons for raising the preemptive opening bid when responder has three-card or longer *support* for opener's suit. **First, responder may have enough strength that the partnership can likely make a game contract.** For example, suppose North opens 3♠, East passes, and it's South's call.



4♠. With three-card support for North's spades, South expects North to have a good chance of taking ten tricks. South counts three sure tricks, the ♠A and ♦A-K. There is also a chance that North will be able to trump a second round of hearts with a small spade in the South hand—the dummy—to gain a trick. North may even be able to trump more than one heart in the dummy. So, the partnership should go for the game bonus. North has about six playing tricks and South can likely contribute four tricks, for a total of ten tricks.

There is another reason to raise opener's preemptive bid. **There may be so little combined strength that it is likely the opponents can make a game or even a *slam* contract.** With three or more cards in opener's suit, responder might want to raise to make it more challenging for the opponents to reach their best contract.



4♠. Here South raises to game out of weakness rather than strength. South doesn't expect the partnership to take ten tricks. However, since North has shown a weak hand with little or no strength outside the spade suit, it's likely the opponents can make at least a game contract and maybe a slam if given enough room to find their best spot. By raising to 4♠, South hopes to take away more bidding room from the opponents.

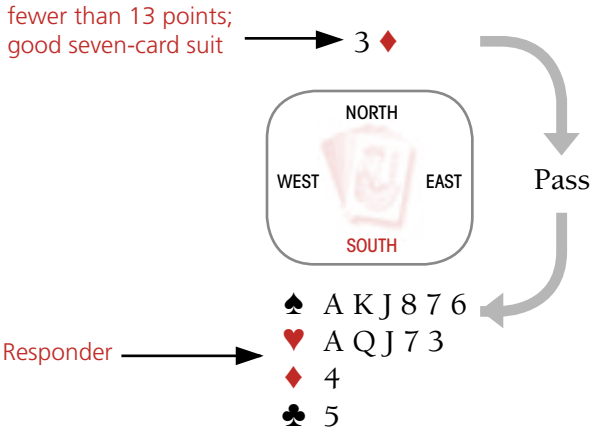
Even though the 4♠ contract will probably be defeated, the opponents' score is likely to be less than the score they would get for bidding and making their game or slam contract. South is making a sacrifice.

### Bidding a New Suit

If responder can determine **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs, responder can simply bid to the appropriate contract. For example, responder can make a *signoff* bid by bidding a game in another suit.

If responder is unsure **HOW HIGH** or **WHERE** the contract belongs, responder needs to make a *forcing* bid to get more information from opener. **A new suit bid below game is forcing even in competition.** Opener must bid again. Since opener is already promising a good

seven-card suit, responder will usually have a good six-card or longer suit to suggest an alternative trump suit and be able to imagine a game. For example:



3♠. Despite North's preemptive opening bid, South wants to look for a fit in a major suit. South responds 3♠. When South bids a new suit, North can raise with support or *rebid* the original suit without support. If North rebids 4♦, South plans to bid 4♥ next, hoping North will have support for one of the suits.

### Bidding No Trump

It's rare for responder to choose a notrump contract after an opening preemptive bid. It's often difficult to get to partner's hand unless the long suit is trump because entries are a problem.

## The Weak Two-Bid

Like the three-level preemptive opening bid, the weak two-bid is primarily an obstructive bid, designed to make it more difficult for the opponents to enter the bidding and find their best contract. However, it is also quite descriptive, helping responder decide **How HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs.

For a preemptive opening bid in a suit at the two level, the guideline is:

### Two-Level Preemptive Opening (Weak Two-Bid)

An opening bid of 2♦, 2♥, or 2♠ shows:

- A six-card suit      Usually two of the top three or three of the top five cards in the suit.
- 5–11 high-card points      Less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.

The main difference between a weak two-bid and a three-level preemptive opening is that a weak two-bid is typically made with a six-card suit and a three-level preempt is made with a seven-card suit. Also, weak two-bids can be opened only in diamonds, hearts, and spades, not clubs<sup>4</sup>.

### Examples

The following hands meet the requirements for a weak two-bid:

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| ♠ 7            | 2♥. This is an ideal hand for a weak two-bid  |
| ♥ K Q J 10 9 8 | opening. There are only 6 high-card points    |
| ♦ 10 7 3       | plus two length points, not enough to open    |
| ♣ 9 6 2        | 1♥. The solid heart suit will produce five    |
|                | playing tricks with hearts as the trump suit. |

<sup>4</sup>The 2♣ opening bid is used to show a very strong hand of about 22 or more points. This is covered in BRIDGE BASICS 3—POPULAR CONVENTIONS.



♠ A J 10 9 7 3    2♠. The suit has three of the top five honors and  
♥ 4 2                    the hand has only 6 high-card points. Open-  
♦ 7 4                    ing 2♠ describes the hand well and makes the  
♣ J 5 2                    auction more challenging for the opponents  
                                 if they have the majority of the strength. It's  
a challenge to estimate the number of playing tricks, but the hand  
could be expected to take at least four, and maybe five, tricks.

♠ 8 6                    2♦. This hand barely qualifies for a weak two-bid.  
♥ Q 5 2                    There are only 5 high-card points, putting this  
♦ Q J 10 8 7 3            on the low end of the scale. The suit does have  
♣ 7 6                    three of the top five honors, but you wouldn't  
                                 want to have much less. Missing the ♦A and ♦K,  
you could expect only four playing tricks.

Here are hands that would not meet the requirements for a weak  
two-bid.

♠ 10 8 6 5 4 3    Pass. The suit quality isn't good enough for a  
♥ A 10 3                    weak two-bid although there is a six-card suit.  
♦ 8 6                    With only 8 high-card points, you would pass.  
♣ K J                    There is no guarantee of taking more than two  
                                 or three tricks with spades as the trump suit  
and the hand has some potential trick-taking value on *defense*.

♠ 4 2                    1♦. There is a good six-card suit and enough  
♥ K 7 2                    strength to make an opening bid at the one  
♦ A K J 9 7 3            level, 12 high-card points plus 2 length points  
♣ J 8                    for the six-card suit.

♠ 10 9 5                    Pass. With a reasonable six-card suit and less  
♥ 7                    than the values for a one-level opening bid,  
♦ J 7 3                    the hand appears suitable for a weak two-bid.  
♣ A Q 10 8 7 5            However, an opening bid of 2♣ is reserved to  
                                 show a very strong hand.

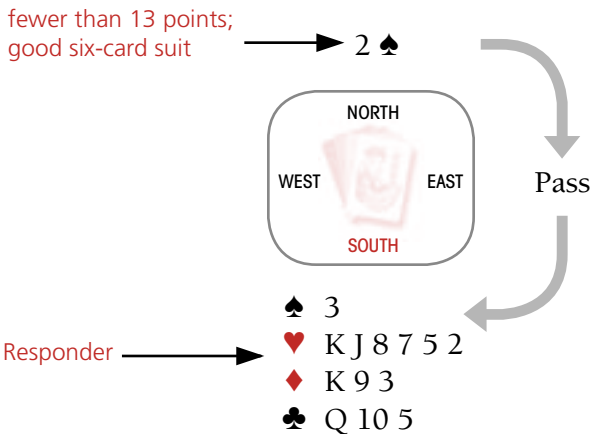
## Responding to a Weak Two-Bid

An opening weak two-bid is very descriptive, showing a good six-card suit but less than the values for an opening bid at the one level. It describes a hand with four or five playing tricks. Responder uses this information to decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs. Responder's decision is based on the trick-taking potential of the *combined hands* rather than high-card points.

The responses are similar to those after a three-level preemptive opening. Responder can pass, raise opener's suit, or bid a new suit. In addition, responder has a special bid, 2 NT, that can be used to obtain more information.

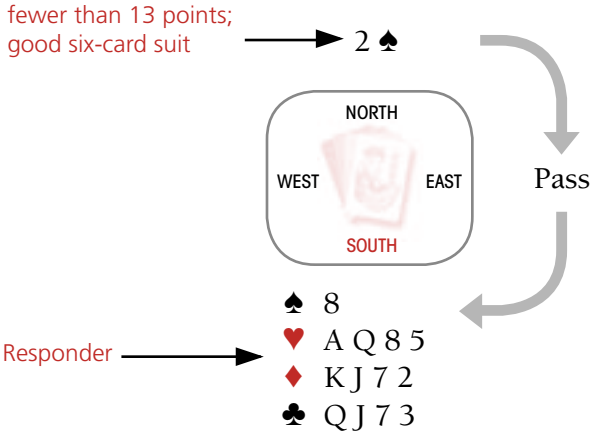
### Pass

Without support for partner's suit, the situation is similar to responding to a three-level opening preemptive bid. It is usually best to pass unless responder has enough strength that a game contract is still a possibility. For example, suppose North opens the bidding 2♠, East passes, and it's South's call.



Pass. South doesn't like partner's choice of spades as the trump suit but, if South bids, the partnership gets higher on the Bidding Ladder with no guarantee of a better landing spot. North's spades

are likely to be as good as or better than South's hearts. North has at most about five playing tricks and South can't contribute enough for game to be a possibility. Responding to a preemptive opening is not the same as responding to an opening bid at the one level.



Pass. South has enough to open the bidding but not the values to take the partnership any higher after North's 2♠ bid. North has less than the values for an opening bid—and only four or five playing tricks—so there won't be enough combined strength to consider going for a game bonus. The only sure trick South can provide is the ♥A. High cards such as the ♥Q, ♦K-J, and ♣Q-J, might provide a couple of tricks, but there is no guarantee. Hopefully, South has enough strength that North can take eight tricks in the 2♠ contract.

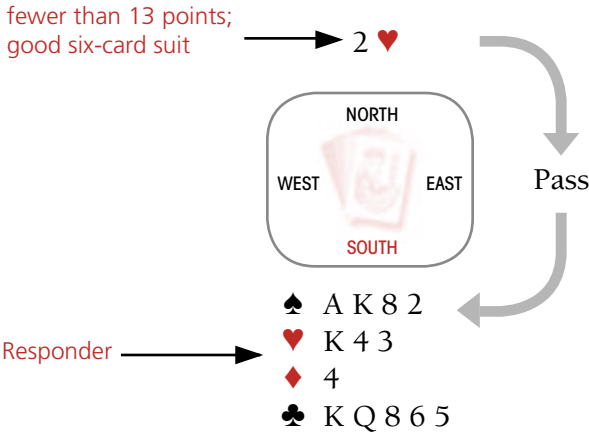
South shouldn't consider playing in notrump with no fit for partner's suit. North's six-card suit will take several tricks if spades are trumps, but won't provide many tricks in a notrump contract. Even if South could *establish* some winning tricks in partner's spade suit, there would be difficulty getting to them. North will have little or no strength outside the spade suit.

## Raising the Preemptive Opening

The weak two-bid is preemptive. The reasons for raising partner's suit are similar to those for raising a three-level preemptive bid:

- Responder may have enough strength that the partnership can likely make a game contract.
- Responder may have so little strength that it is likely the opponents can make a game or even a slam contract. With a fit for partner's suit responder might want to raise to make it more challenging for the opponents to reach their best contract.

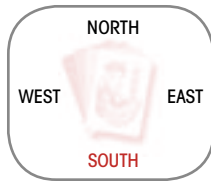
For example, suppose North opens with a weak 2♥ bid, East passes, and South, as responder, has to decide **HOW HIGH** and **WHERE**.



4♥. With three-card support for North's hearts, South can go for the game bonus because there should be a good chance of taking ten tricks. The ♠A, ♠K, ♥K, and ♣K-Q combination should each provide a trick. In addition, North may be able to gain a trick or two by trumping diamonds in the South hand, the dummy, since South has only one diamond.

fewer than 13 points;  
good six-card suit

→ 2♥



Pass

Responder →

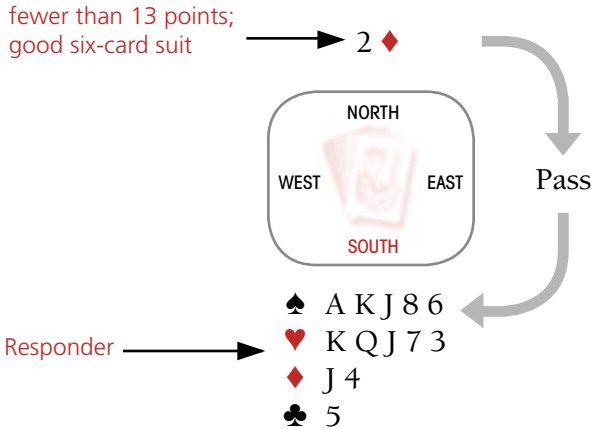
♠ 4  
♥ Q 10 8 3  
♦ 10 8 2  
♣ Q J 8 7 5

4♥. Here South jumps to game for a completely different reason. South doesn't expect the partnership to have enough combined strength to take ten tricks. However, since North has shown a weak hand with little or no strength outside the heart suit, it's likely the opponents can make at least a game contract and maybe a slam if given enough room to find their best spot.

By jumping to 4♥, South hopes to take away even more bidding room from the opponents. Even though the contract will probably be defeated by several tricks, the opponents' score is likely to be less than the score they would receive for bidding and making their game or slam contract.

## Bidding a New Suit

If responder is unsure **HOW HIGH** or **WHERE** the contract belongs, responder needs to make a forcing bid to obtain more information from opener. A response in a new suit is forcing, showing a five-card or longer suit. Opener can raise with support or rebid the original suit without support. For example:



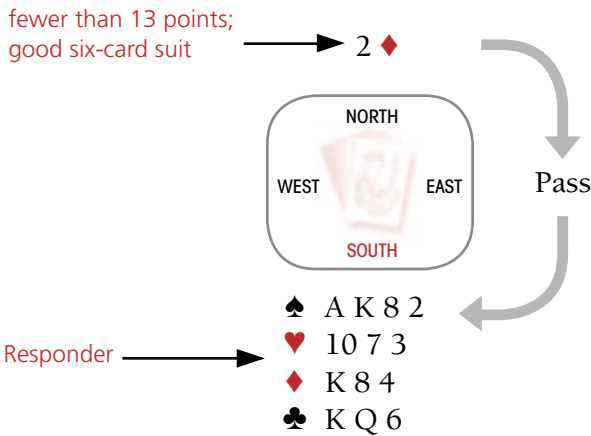
2♠. If North can't support spades and rebids 3♦, South can bid 3♥, showing the second suit. If North doesn't like hearts either and rebids 4♦, South can put the partnership in game in 5♦. Hopefully, the only tricks lost will be a club and a heart.

## The Special Meaning of a 2NT Response

A response of 2NT to a weak two-bid has a special—*conventional*—meaning. It asks opener for a further description of the hand. It is used only when responder can imagine a game if opener has a ‘good’ weak two-bid.

With a minimum weak two-bid of about 5-8 points, opener simply rebids the suit at the three level. With more than a minimum, opener can bid a new suit to show a *feature* in that suit, such as an ace or king, or bid 3NT with a solid suit but no outside feature.

Here is an example of using the 2NT response to obtain more information:



2NT. South has enough to try for game. If North shows a minimum weak two-bid by rebidding 3♦, South can pass and settle for partscore. If North bids 3♥, for example, showing a maximum with the ♥A or ♥K, South can bid game. 3NT is likely to be easier than 5♦.

## Declarer's Plan—The ABC's<sup>5</sup>

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When the auction is over, the *opening lead* is made and dummy is placed face up on the table, declarer should make a plan for taking enough tricks to make the contract. There are three suggested stages, the ABC's:

### Declarer's Plan—The ABC's

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**A**ssess the Situation

**B**rowse Declarer's Checklist to Develop Extra Tricks

**C**onsider the Order

### Assess the Situation

This stage can be divided into three steps:

- 1) **Goal**. Start by considering the number of tricks required to make the contract. In 4♥, for example, declarer needs to take ten tricks.
- 2) **Sure Tricks**<sup>6</sup>. Count the sure tricks, or *winner*s—those that can be taken without giving up the lead. An ace is a sure trick; an ace and king in the same suit are two sure tricks.
- 3) **Extra Tricks Needed**. Compare the number of tricks needed to the sure tricks. If there are eight sure tricks in a contract of 4♥, for example, two more are needed.

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<sup>5</sup> This is a review of play concepts introduced in the first book of the series. A more detailed discussion is in the book on DECLARER PLAY.

<sup>6</sup> In a trump contract, declarer can also count *losers*—the tricks that could be lost to the defenders. This is discussed in more detail in the book on DECLARER PLAY.



## **Browse Declarer's Checklist to Develop Extra Tricks**

When there aren't enough sure tricks to make the contract, declarer looks at the various techniques for developing, or establishing, extra tricks:

Declarer's Checklist	
Promotion	
Length	
The Finesse	
Trumping in Dummy	

The first three methods are available in both notrump and trump contracts. The fourth is available only in trump contracts.

### PROMOTION

Declarer can sometimes turn cards into winners by driving out the higher-ranking cards. For example:

DUMMY

♥ 4 2

Declarer can lead the ♥K, or ♥Q, to drive out the defenders' ♥A and promote the remaining high card into a winner.

DECLARER

♥ K Q

### LENGTH

If declarer continues to lead a suit until the defenders have no cards left, declarer's remaining cards in the suit become winners.

DUMMY

♦ 9 6 3

Declarer can take two sure tricks with the ♦A and ♦K and then lead a third round of diamonds, giving up a trick to the defenders. If the five missing diamonds are divided 3-2, declarer's two remaining diamonds are winners.

DECLARER

♦ A K 7 5 2

In predicting how many tricks can be developed from a suit through length, declarer can use the guideline:

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An odd number of missing cards tends to divide as evenly as possible; an even number of missing cards tends to divide slightly unevenly.

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So, when five cards are missing, declarer can expect them to divide evenly, 3-2. If six cards are missing, declarer can expect them to divide slightly unevenly, 4-2. There is no guarantee when developing tricks through length. Five missing cards could be divided 4-1 or 5-0. Six missing cards could be divided 3-3, 5-1, or 6-0.

#### THE FINESSE

Declarer can sometimes develop tricks with high cards when the defenders hold higher-ranking cards.

DUMMY	The ♠A is a sure trick, but the ♠Q is not since
♠ A Q	the defenders have the ♠K. However, declarer
	can hope to take two tricks by leading a low
DECLARER	spade toward dummy and playing—finessing
♠ 7 6	—dummy's ♠Q. If the ♠K is favorably placed
	on declarer's left, the ♠Q will win. If the ♠K

is unfavorably placed on declarer's right, the finesse will lose and declarer will get only one trick.

A general guideline for taking finesses is to **lead toward the card you hope will take a trick.**

## TRUMPING IN DUMMY

In a trump contract declarer can sometimes gain a trick by using dummy's trump.

DUMMY	The trump suit is hearts. If declarer takes the five heart winners and the ♣A, declarer gets six tricks. If declarer plays the ♣A and then leads the ♣7 and trumps it in the dummy, declarer gets seven tricks: the ♣A, the ruff, and the five heart winners. Declarer gains a trick by trumping in the dummy.
♥ 7 5 3	
♣ 6	
DECLARER	
♥ A K Q J 10	
♣ A 7	

## Consider the Order

When developing and taking tricks, the order in which the tricks are played can be important. Here are some considerations:

- 1) **Take the tricks and run.** With enough sure tricks to make the contract, declarer should generally take them.
- 2) **Draw trumps.** In a trump contract, declarer should draw the defenders' trumps by playing the trump suit until the defenders have none left, unless declarer needs the trump suit for other purposes, such as trumping in dummy.
- 3) **Keep enough trumps in dummy.** When planning on trumping in dummy, declarer may have to delay drawing trumps to keep enough trumps in dummy.
- 4) **Develop extra tricks early.** To develop extra tricks, one or more tricks may have to be lost. Declarer should not be afraid to lose such tricks early, while keeping sure tricks in the other suits to regain the lead and then take the established winners.
- 5) **Be in the right place at the right time.** Declarer must often plan to be in the appropriate hand to take or establish winners.
- 6) **Play the high card from the short side first.** When taking sure tricks or promoting winners in suits that are unevenly divided between the hands, it's usually a good idea to start by playing the high cards from the hand with the fewer cards.

## SUMMARY

### **Requirements for a Three Level Preemptive Opening**

- A good seven-card suit.
- Less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.

### **Requirements for a Weak Two-Bid Opening**

- A good six-card suit in diamonds, hearts, or spades.
- 5–11 high-card points.

### **Responding to a Preemptive Opening**

When responding to a preemptive opening, focus on the trick-taking potential of the combined hands instead of the high-card points.

- Pass with no fit for opener's suit and little prospect of making a game contract.
- Raise opener's suit in two situations:
  - When the partnership is likely to be able to take enough tricks to make a game contract.
  - When you have support for opener's suit but a weak hand and it is likely the opponents can make at least a game contract.
- When you are interested in reaching game but are unsure **How HIGH** and **WHERE** the partnership belongs:
  - Bid a new suit (forcing) to see if opener has support.
  - Bid 2NT after a weak two-bid to ask for more information.

### **The Guideline of 500**

When making a preemptive opening bid:

- Don't overbid by more than three tricks when non vulnerable.
- Don't overbid by more than two tricks when vulnerable.

Quiz – Part I

(For a) through s) refer to pages 3 and 4 or refer to the scoring summary in Appendix 2 on page 215.)

What is the trick score for bidding and making the following contracts:

- a) 2♥? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) 4♠? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) 2NT? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) 4♦? \_\_\_\_\_
- e) 5♣? \_\_\_\_\_
- f) 3NT? \_\_\_\_\_
- g) Which of the above contracts would be game contracts?

What is the total score at duplicate bridge for bidding and making the following contracts when non vulnerable:

- h) 3NT? \_\_\_\_\_
- i) 4♠? \_\_\_\_\_
- j) 5♦? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the total score at duplicate bridge for bidding and making the following contracts when vulnerable:

- k) 3NT? \_\_\_\_\_
- l) 4♥? \_\_\_\_\_
- m) 2♠? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the penalty for being defeated the following number of tricks:

- n) Down one trick, non vulnerable and not doubled? \_\_\_\_\_
- o) Down two tricks, non vulnerable and doubled? \_\_\_\_\_
- p) Down three tricks, non vulnerable and doubled? \_\_\_\_\_
- q) Down two tricks, vulnerable and not doubled? \_\_\_\_\_
- r) Down two tricks, vulnerable and doubled? \_\_\_\_\_
- s) Down three tricks, vulnerable and doubled? \_\_\_\_\_

How many playing tricks are in each of the following hands?

- |            |                  |                |
|------------|------------------|----------------|
| t) ♠ A 8 5 | u) ♠ 10 5        | v) ♠ 3         |
| ♥ A 9 6    | ♥ 7 3            | ♥ A K J 10 9 8 |
| ♦ A K 6 5  | ♦ K Q J 10 9 7 6 | ♦ 9 5 4        |
| ♣ 9 7 3    | ♣ 8 4            | ♣ J 6 2        |
| _____      | _____            | _____          |

## Answers to Quiz – Part I

---

- a) 60 (30 + 30). Major suit contracts, hearts and spades, score 30 points per trick.
- b) 120 (30 + 30 + 30 + 30).
- c) 70 (40 + 30). Notrump contracts score 40 points for the first trick and 30 points per trick thereafter.
- d) 80 (20 + 20 + 20 + 20). Minor suit contracts, clubs and diamonds, score 20 points per trick.
- e) 100 (20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20).
- f) 100 (40 + 30 + 30)
- g) b), e) and f). Game contracts are those worth 100 or more points.
- h) 400. Trick score of 100 (40 + 30 + 30) plus a 300 non vulnerable game bonus.
- i) 420. Trick score of 120 (30 + 30 + 30 + 30) plus a 300 non vulnerable game bonus.
- j) 400 Trick score of 100 (20 + 20 + 20 + 20 + 20) plus a 300 non vulnerable game bonus.
- k) 600. Trick score of 100 (40 + 30 + 30) plus a 500 vulnerable game bonus.
- l) 620. Trick score of 120 (30 + 30 + 30 + 30) plus a 500 vulnerable game bonus.
- m) 110. Trick score of 60 (30 + 30) plus a 50 point partscore bonus.
- n) 50. The penalty for being defeated non vulnerable and not doubled is 50 points per trick.
- o) 300 (100 + 200). The penalty for being defeated non vulnerable and doubled is 100 for the first trick, 200 for the second and third tricks, and 300 per trick thereafter.
- p) 500 (100 + 200 + 200).
- q) 200 (100 + 100). The penalty for being defeated vulnerable and not doubled is 100 points per trick.
- r) 500 (200 + 300). The penalty for being defeated vulnerable and doubled is 200 for the first trick and 300 per trick thereafter.
- s) 800 (200 + 300 + 300).
- t) Four. The ♠A, ♥A, and ♦A-K can be expected to take tricks.
- u) Six. With diamonds as the trump suit, this hand can be expected to take six diamond tricks by driving out the missing ♦A.
- v) Five. With hearts as the trump suit, this hand can be expected to take five tricks. One heart trick may have to be lost to the missing ♥Q.



## Answers to Quiz – Part II

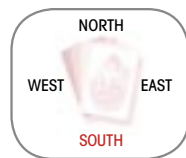
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- a) 3♣. With a good seven-card suit and less than the values for an opening bid at the one level, South can open with a preemptive bid.
- b) 3♠. The suit isn't solid but has three of the top five cards. South can expect to take five or six tricks with this suit so an opening bid of 3♠ is reasonable.
- c) 1♥. South has a good seven-card suit but also has 12 high-card points plus 3 length points for the seven-card suit. With a hand that values 13 or more points, South opens at the one level.
- d) Pass. South has a weak hand and a seven-card suit but the suit doesn't have any top honors. It would be too risky to open a preemptive bid.
- e) 3♦. The diamond suit is good enough that it should provide at least five tricks even if South has to lose to the ♦A and ♦Q. The club suit might also provide a trick through length. Opening 3♦ is a practical bid.
- f) Pass. This is a close decision. Some players might open 3♠ but it is risky with a suit of this quality. Still, it could work well.
- g) Pass. South has only one sure trick. The partnership is high enough.
- h) 4♥. North should have about six playing tricks. South's ♠A, ♥K, and ♦A-K should provide enough tricks to make game.
- i) Pass. North should have more hearts than South has spades. Bidding is unlikely to improve the contract.
- j) 3♠. North may have enough spades to raise. If not, North will rebid 4♥ and South can hope that is the best contract. 3♠ is forcing.
- k) 4♥. With an excellent fit for hearts but little else, it is likely East-West can make a game or slam. South raises as a further preemptive action.
- l) Pass. South's assortment of high cards might provide some tricks for North but unlikely enough to make a game.
- m) 4♥. South doesn't expect to make 4♥ but it is likely East-West can make 4♠ or more. South's raise makes it more difficult for East-West.
- n) 4♥. South doesn't have a lot of hearts but the hand should provide enough tricks for game. Notrump is unlikely to be successful since there may be no way to reach North's hand.
- o) Pass. South has a little help but not enough to raise to game. South also has some potential tricks on defense if East-West decide to compete.



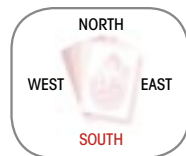
Quiz – Part III

Neither side is vulnerable. East passes. What call would South make with the following hands?



- | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      |       | PASS | ?     |
- a) ♠ A Q J 10 9 5      b) ♠ 5 3      c) ♠ 8 5  
 ♥ 6 4                      ♥ 7 4                      ♥ 7 3 2  
 ♦ J 8 5                     ♦ K Q 10 9 7 4         ♦ K 4  
 ♣ 7 3                        ♣ Q 10 5                 ♣ A J 9 7 6 3
- d) ♠ K Q 4                e) ♠ K Q 10 9 7 6 4    f) ♠ 7 5  
 ♥ K J 10 9 7 3         ♥ 5                         ♥ Q J 9 7 6 3  
 ♦ A 9 2                    ♦ 8 7 4                    ♦ A 9 5  
 ♣ 6                         ♣ 7 3                      ♣ 8 7

Both sides are vulnerable. North opens 2♥ and East passes. What call would South make with the following hands?



- | WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      | 2♥    | PASS | ?     |
- g) ♠ K J 7 3              h) ♠ A K 8 4              i) ♠ 3  
 ♥ 6 4                      ♥ K 8 3                    ♥ A J 7 5  
 ♦ A Q 8 5 4              ♦ 4                         ♦ Q 3 2  
 ♣ Q 7                      ♣ K Q J 6 2              ♣ 10 8 7 5 2
- j) ♠ A Q 8 7 6 3        k) ♠ A Q 8 4              l) ♠ K Q J  
 ♥ 5                         ♥ 3                         ♥ A 9 5  
 ♦ K J 4                    ♦ Q J 6 4                 ♦ J 8 3  
 ♣ Q 9 6                    ♣ K J 6 2                 ♣ A 7 5 2

### Answers to Quiz – Part III

---

- a) 2♠. With 8 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, South doesn't have enough to open at the one level but can open with a weak two-bid.
- b) 2♦. With a good six-card suit and only 7 high-card points, South can open with a weak two-bid in diamonds to describe the hand.
- c) Pass. Although South has a six-card club suit and not enough strength to open at the one level, South can't open a weak two-bid when clubs is the suit. South passes instead.
- d) 1♥. South has a good six-card suit but, with 13 high-card points plus 2 length points, South can open at the one level.
- e) 3♠. An opening of 3♠ is appropriate holding a good seven-card suit and less than the values for an opening bid at the one level.
- f) Pass/2♥. This is a borderline decision since the quality of the heart suit is not ideal. Some players would open 2♥; others would pass. It would be easier if the ace were in hearts instead of diamonds.
- g) Pass. Although South has enough strength to open the bidding—12 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card suit—there is unlikely to be enough combined playing tricks to make game.
- h) 4♥. North should have about five playing tricks with hearts as the trump suit. South's hand should provide about five: two in spades, one in hearts, two in clubs and North may be able to ruff a diamond in the South hand.
- i) 4♥. South doesn't expect to make 4♥ but, with such an excellent fit in North's suit and so little strength outside, South wants to make it more challenging for East-West to enter the auction.
- j) Pass. South might prefer spades as the trump suit, but there's no guarantee South's spades are better than North's hearts. Also, a 2♠ response would be forcing, likely getting the partnership too high.
- k) Pass. Since North is showing a hand too weak to open at the one level, it's unlikely there is enough combined strength for game. A notrump contract is unlikely to be successful since North will have little strength outside the heart suit.
- l) 2NT. With enough strength to be interested in reaching a game contract, South can make use of the conventional 2NT response to get further information about North's hand. If North rebids 3♥ to show a minimum weak two-bid, South can pass and settle for partscore. If North bids anything else, South can go for the game bonus.

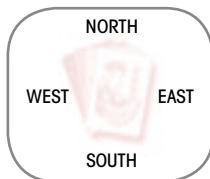
**DEAL: 1**

DEALER: NORTH

VUL: NONE

♠ 6 3  
♥ A K 7 2  
♦ 8 5 4 2  
♣ A Q 2

♠ K Q J 10 9 8 7  
♥ 10 5  
♦ 6 3  
♣ 8 6



The suggested opening lead is underlined and in red in the sample deals.

♠ A 5 2  
♥ 9 6 3  
♦ K Q J 10  
♣ K 5 3

The shading indicates the expected dummy hand in the sample deals.

♠ 4  
♥ QJ 8 4  
♦ A 9 7  
♣ J 10 9 7 4

**Suggested Bidding**

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	3♠	PASS	PASS
PASS(?)			

North has only 6 high-card points plus 3 length points, not enough to open the bidding at the one level. With a good seven-card suit, however, North can make a preemptive opening bid of 3♠. This bid is obstructive, taking away a lot of bidding room from the opponents.

East has 13 high-card points, enough to open the bidding 1♦ but not enough to start competing at the three level or higher. North's preemptive 3♠ opening interferes with East's bid. East passes.

Although North's bid is obstructive, it is also descriptive. South knows the type of hand North holds. South doesn't like North's choice of trump suit, but knows that North has a good seven-card suit and wants to play with spades as trumps. With only one sure trick, the ♦A, South knows the partnership doesn't have enough combined strength for game and South passes.

West has 13 high-card points, enough to open at the one level. However, North's 3♠ opening has made it awkward for West to enter the auction. West may choose to pass<sup>7</sup>. That would end the auction.

<sup>7</sup> West might choose to enter the auction with a takeout double. This call is discussed in Chapter 3.

If North had passed instead of opening 3♠, East-West would likely get to a game contract of 3NT after an auction like this:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	PASS	1♦	PASS
1♥	PASS <sup>8</sup>	1NT	PASS
3NT	PASS	PASS	PASS

In 3NT, East has six tricks, the ♠A, ♥A-K, and ♣A-K-Q. East can promote three diamond tricks. Even if North can promote six spade winners, there is no way North can gain the lead to take them.

### Suggested Opening Lead

East would lead the ♦K, top of the solid sequence, against North's 3♠ contract.

### Suggested Play

North's goal is to take 9 tricks. There is only one sure trick, the ♦A. Eight more tricks are needed.

So, North moves to the second planning stage and browses Declarer's Checklist. North can plan to develop six winners in the spade suit through promotion. That will provide a total of seven tricks, two short of the goal, but that's the best declarer can do. The contract will be defeated two tricks.

#### DECLARER'S PLAN—THE ABC'S

Declarer: North Contract: 3♠

#### ASSESS THE SITUATION

Goal	9
Sure Tricks	1
Extra Tricks Needed	8

#### BROWSE DECLARER'S CHECKLIST

Promotion	6 in spades
Length	
The Finesse	
Trumping in Dummy	

#### CONSIDER THE ORDER

- Draw trumps.

### Conclusion

Being defeated two tricks in 3♠ is a good result for North-South. Since North and South are non vulnerable, the penalty is 100 points (50 per trick). That's much less than the score East-West would receive for bidding and making a game contract of 3NT. Even if North-South were doubled in the 3♠ contract, they would lose only 300 points.

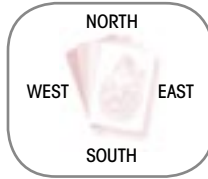
<sup>8</sup> North might enter the auction at this point (see Chapter 2) but East and West are still likely to reach a game contract.

**DEAL: 2**

DEALER: EAST

VUL: N-S

♠ A K 4 2  
♥ 9  
♦ A J 8 2  
♣ A 8 5 2



♠ 9 6 5  
♥ A 6  
♦ K 10 7 5  
♣ K Q J 9

♠ 7 3  
♥ K Q J 10 8 7 3  
♦ 6  
♣ 10 7 4

♠ Q J 10 8  
♥ 5 4 2  
♦ Q 9 4 3  
♣ 6 3

**Suggested Bidding**

	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			3♥	PASS
	4♥	PASS	PASS	PASS

East has a good seven-card suit but not enough to open the bidding at the one level. Instead, East can start the auction with a preemptive opening bid of 3♥. East-West are non vulnerable and East’s heart suit should produce six tricks.

South, with 5 high-card points, passes.

West knows that partner has a seven-card heart suit, so hearts should be a good trump suit even though West has only one heart. West also knows that East has about six playing tricks. With four sure tricks—the ♠A-K, ♦A, and ♣A—the partnership should be able to take ten tricks. West puts the partnership in the game contract of 4♥.

North, with 13 high-card points, doesn’t have enough to enter the auction at the four level and passes. East and South have nothing more to say, so the auction is over.

**Suggested Opening Lead**

South would lead the ♠Q, top of the solid sequence, against East’s 4♥ contract.

## Suggested Play

After South makes the opening lead and the West hand comes down as the dummy, East makes a plan. As declarer, **East's goal is to take at least ten tricks** to make the 4♥ contract. East begins by counting the sure winners: two spades, one diamond, and one club for a total of four tricks. **Six more tricks are required.**

Moving to the second stage, East browses Declarer's Checklist. **The heart suit will provide six tricks through promotion** once the ♥A is driven out.

After winning the first trick with one of dummy's high spades, declarer's priority is to **draw the defenders' trumps**. Declarer leads dummy's heart and continues leading hearts until the ♥A is driven out and the defenders have no trumps remaining. It is then safe for declarer to take the remaining winners.

## Conclusion

West should not consider bidding 3NT with only one heart. East's hand is unlikely to produce many tricks in a notrump contract, but will provide a lot of tricks with hearts as the trump suit.

### DECLARER'S PLAN—THE ABC'S

Declarer: East      Contract: 4♥

#### ASSESS THE SITUATION

Goal	10
Sure Tricks	4
Extra Tricks Needed	6

#### BROWSE DECLARER'S CHECKLIST

- Promotion:      6 in hearts
- Length
- The Finesse
- Trumping in Dummy

#### CONSIDER THE ORDER

- Draw trumps.

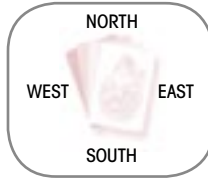
**DEAL: 3**

DEALER: SOUTH

VUL: E-W

♠ 10 4  
♥ A Q 7 6  
♦ A 10 8 5  
♣ K 9 3

♠ 3 2  
♥ K 9 4 3  
♦ K J 9  
♣ Q J 10 7



♠ A 7 5  
♥ J 10 5  
♦ Q 7 4 2  
♣ A 8 5

♠ K Q J 9 8 6  
♥ 8 2  
♦ 6 3  
♣ 6 4 2

**Suggested Bidding**

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
PASS	PASS	PASS	2♠

South is the dealer but, with 6 high-card points plus 2 length points, does not have enough to open the bidding at the one level. With a good six-card suit, however, South can open the bidding with a weak two-bid, 2♠. South is non vulnerable and has a reasonable expectation of taking five tricks with spades as trumps.

West has 10 high-card points and passes.

North has 13 high-card points, but knows there is unlikely to be enough combined strength for a game contract because South has shown less than the values for an opening bid. North passes.

East has 11 high-card points and passes, ending the auction. South becomes declarer in a contract of 2♠.

**Suggested Opening Lead**

With a solid sequence in clubs, **West starts with the ♣Q**, top of the touching high cards, against South's 2♠ contract.

### Suggested Play

When the North hand is put down as the dummy, declarer makes a plan for playing the hand. **South's goal is to take at least eight tricks.** South can count on one sure trick in hearts and one in diamonds. That's a total of two tricks, **six short of the goal.**

South browses Declarer's Checklist for ways to develop the extra tricks. **Five tricks can be promoted in the spade suit.** Declarer can hope for an extra trick in hearts by trying the

finesse. If West holds the ♥K, **declarer can lead toward the ♥Q, the card declarer hopes will take a trick.**

After gaining the lead, declarer can start by leading spades. This has the two-fold effect of promoting winners in the spade suit by driving out the ♠A and of **drawing trumps.**

After trumps are drawn, it is time for the heart finesse. Declarer needs to be in the South hand to **lead a low heart and finesse dummy's ♥Q.** As long as West holds the ♥K, declarer will get a trick with both dummy's ♥Q and ♥A.

### Conclusion

The weak two-bid immediately gets North-South to their best contract. If East-West enter the auction on this hand, they will get too high and North-South will score points by defeating their contract.

#### DECLARER'S PLAN—THE ABC'S

Declarer: South    Contract: 2♠

##### ASSESS THE SITUATION

Goal	8
Sure Tricks	2
Extra Tricks Needed	6

##### BROWSE DECLARER'S CHECKLIST

Promotion:	5 in spades
Length	
The Finesse	1 in hearts
Trumping in Dummy	

##### CONSIDER THE ORDER

- Draw trumps.
- Be in the right place at the right time ( to lead toward dummy's ♥Q).



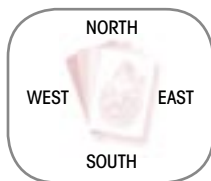
**DEAL: 4**

DEALER: WEST

VUL: BOTH

♠ 7 5  
 ♥ A 9 7 5 2  
 ♦ A 5  
 ♣ K 7 6 3

♠ A K J 10 9 4  
 ♥ J 8 4  
 ♦ 9 4  
 ♣ 10 5



♠ Q 8 6 3  
 ♥ 10  
 ♦ Q J 10 7 6 3  
 ♣ J 8

♠ 2  
 ♥ K Q 6 3  
 ♦ K 8 2  
 ♣ A Q 9 4 2

**Suggested Bidding**

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♠	PASS	4♠!	PASS(?)
PASS	PASS		

West doesn't have enough to open at the one level with only 9 high-card points and 2 length points. However, with a good suit and a reasonable expectation of taking five or six tricks with spades as trumps, West can open with a weak 2♠ bid.

North has 11 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card suit. North would have to bid at the three level to suggest hearts as trumps and that is too high. North passes.

East has only 6 high-card points but an excellent fit for spades. East can't expect the partnership to take more than seven or eight tricks, but that isn't the only consideration in deciding whether to pass or bid. West has shown a weak hand and East has so little strength it is very likely the opponents have enough strength for at least game. To make it more difficult for North-South to enter the auction, **East can take additional preemptive action by jumping to 4♠!**

South is now faced with a challenging decision on whether to enter the auction. With 14 high-card points plus 1 length point, South has enough to open at the one level but it might be danger-

ous to bid at the four level. South might choose to pass<sup>9</sup>. West and North will then pass, ending the auction.

### Suggested Opening Lead

Against a trump contract, a low card is not usually led from a suit headed by an ace. So, **North might choose to lead the ♣3, fourth highest** in that suit. North might also consider leading the ♥A or ♦A.

### Suggested Play

**West's goal is to take ten tricks with spades as trumps.** West counts six sure tricks in spades, but that's all. **Four more tricks need to be developed.**

Browsing Declarer's Checklist, **there is an opportunity to get two extra tricks by trumping hearts in the dummy.** Declarer will have to lose one heart trick first.

Suppose the defenders take the first two clubs and then lead a spade. Declarer can win and play a second round of spades to draw the remaining trump, but shouldn't play any more trumps.

Instead, declarer gives up a heart trick. On regaining the lead, declarer can trump a heart in dummy. After getting back to the West hand, declarer can trump the remaining heart in dummy.

### Conclusion

Being defeated two tricks in 4♠ is an excellent result for East-West. North-South can take twelve tricks with either hearts or clubs as the trump suit: five heart tricks, two diamonds, and five clubs. Even if the 4♠ contract is doubled, the penalty of 500 points for being defeated two tricks is less than the value of North-South's potential game or slam contract.

<sup>9</sup> South's options for entering the auction will be discussed in Chapter 3.

#### DECLARER'S PLAN—THE ABC'S

Declarer: West      Contract: 4♠

##### ASSESS THE SITUATION

Goal	10
Sure Tricks	6
Extra Tricks Needed	4

##### BROWSE DECLARER'S CHECKLIST

Promotion	
Length	
The Finesse	
Trumping in Dummy	2 in hearts

##### CONSIDER THE ORDER

- Draw trumps.
- Keep two hearts in dummy to ruff hearts.