

PREEMPTIVE THREE BIDS

Preemptive openings at the three level show a hand with one long strong suit and nothing in the way of defensive strength. A suit headed by the ace is especially undesirable, representing too much defensive potential if partner has a singleton. Just pass and overcall later if the hand contains an ace.

A singleton or void in a side minor is undesirable for the same reason--too much defense. Shortness in a side major is okay. Adequate trump support for a side major is also a flaw, especially in first or second seat. You could miss a good contract in that major, since partner will assume that a weak preempt lacks good support for a side major.

The strength of a preemptive hand will vary with vulnerability, something like this:

Unfavorable vulnerability - within 1-1/2 tricks of contract

Both vulnerable within 2 tricks of contract

Neither vulnerable within 2-1/2 tricks of contract

Favorable vulnerability within 3 tricks of contract

These can be relaxed 1/2 trick or so if partner is a passed hand.

Responses

New suit responses by an unpassed hand are forcing, except for game bids. A 3NT response is a command for the preemptive opener to pass--it is not a "suggestion." Responder could have a void in opener's long suit and nine tricks of her own. A four-level minor suit response is an asking bid:

Opener	Responder
3♥	3♠ - forcing
	3NT - opener must pass
	4♣/4♦ - asking bids

When the response to a preemptive three bid is a new suit at the three level, opener bids 3NT to show a little support (Qx, xxx) for responder's suit. He must not raise because responder may have only Jxx in the suit, fishing for a notrump contract, or may be psyching. All this must be Alerted, of course: "That is an asking bid, not a telling bid. He is asking me to bid notrump with a little something in that suit, and otherwise to rebid my suit or show a lower-ranked feature."

See section 6-5 for responses to asking bids.