

## For Intermediate Players

**Sally:** Okay, let's see if I grasp the principles.

**Professor:** Using the sequence above, neither vulnerable, what action would you take holding

♠KJ105 ♥93 ♦A7 ♣A10862?  
**Sally:** It looks like a juicy double. I rate my spade holding as worth three tricks, assuming the ace-queen at my right. Add two aces, maybe something from partner, and they're going down.

**Professor:** Too quick on the trigger, Sally. I agree that they are a favorite to be set, although if Q-x of spades turns up in dummy, we lose a trump trick.

The greater worry is that they might make 4♥. Recall that a classic first-seat preempt denies a four-card major on the side. Thus, they hold a minimum of eight hearts and some of our spade tricks may be ruffed away in a heart contract.

Sit tight; if LHO happens to raise to 4♠, then it's time to double.

Try another one, same sequence:

♠Q1097 ♥KQ62 ♦8 ♣K973

**Sally:** Counting defensive tricks here is harder. I'd guess that I'm worth two spade tricks, one or two hearts and maybe one club. I like my singleton diamond lead, but it feels too close to double.

**Professor:** Good judgment. Any diamond ruff we score will be at the expense of a natural trump trick, and, for all we know, they might be about to bid 4♠. There are enough high-card points outstanding for that to happen. Try another, same sequence:

♠AK94 ♥A83 ♦A92 ♣Q94

**Sally:** Interesting possibilities. I think that the ♠9 is there to tempt me into doubling, but my instincts say 3NT.

**Professor:** I'm glad you noticed the spade spots when considering a penalty double, and I'm happier still with your 3NT conclusion. You hold what are called "convertible values" — they are useful for both offense and defense. 3NT is a heavy favorite, meaning we would need to defeat 3♠ doubled by three tricks at equal vulnerability to compensate.

Here's one more problem, same sequence with both vulnerable:

♠K1094 ♥AQ63 ♦97 ♣AK6

**Sally:** Isn't this like the previous problem?

**Professor:** It may look similar, but the differences are noteworthy. The lack of an honor card in partner's preempt should alarm you about 3NT.

If the ♦K is missing, it is probably offside with the 3♠ bidder. The defense can usually hold up their diamond winner(s) and isolate you from the dummy. The offensive risk is too great. Defensive prospects, on the other hand, are bright. Estimate the tricks.

**Sally:** Could be two spades, two hearts and two clubs.

**Professor:** Certainly could be — this is the time to double. Now, let's practice defense. What is your opening lead?

**Sally:** A high club or a diamond; does it matter which?

**Professor:** I'd lead the ♦9. The club winners aren't disappearing, and sometimes a high club lead helps declarer establish a Q-J combination. This is the dummy:

♠ 72  
 ♥ J982  
 ♦ 3  
 ♣ QJ9742

♠ K1094  
 ♥ AQ63  
 ♦ 97  
 ♣ AK6

Partner plays the ♦Q and declarer wins the ace. Declarer ruffs a diamond in dummy and tries the ♣Q, partner following with the 3. You have the lead — what next?

**Sally:** I feel stuck which means I'm enplayed. I'm afraid to continue clubs because partner's count card suggests a tripleton. The majors look dangerous as well.

**Professor:** True, but the ♠10 should be a safe exit. You maintain your two natural trump tricks while preventing a further diamond ruff. Examine the deal if you want help in following the conclusions.

## For Intermediate Players

Let declarer ruff, so what?

**Professor:** Not exactly. Declarer should discard his diamond loser, leaving you truly enplayed. Dummy's clubs are established and the ♥J will become an entry. In effect, you would be forced to cash your ♥A, losing a heart trick.

The antidote is to exit with a low heart before releasing your high club. Now the endplay is on the other foot. If declarer wins in hand and continues hearts, you cash the ♥AQ and exit with a high club, stranding declarer with his losing diamond.

If declarer wins your low heart exit with dummy's jack and tries the ♣J for a throw-in, partner's ♣10 comes into play to stop the suit, permitting you a safe club exit.

**Sally:** This is complicated.

**Professor:** The optimum defense produces down two — two spades, two hearts, one diamond and one club. Still, down one, doubled and vulnerable, yields plus 200, which beats all diamond contracts (10 tricks) and no trump (no play). So, on this deal, you don't have to be a demon defender. It's enough to be a confident doubler. □

♠ 72  
 ♥ J982  
 ♦ 3  
 ♣ QJ9742

♠ K1094  
 ♥ AQ63  
 ♦ 97  
 ♣ AK6

N	E
W	S

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

After your ♠10 return, declarer will win cheaply and continue with the ♠A and another trump. You cash your spade winners and have one more exit to find. By now, you have a count on declarer's distribution: six spades, presumably three diamonds due to partner's preempt, and one club, leaving three hearts.

**Sally:** Couldn't clubs be divided 3-1, leaving declarer with a singleton heart?  
**Professor:** That would give partner two black suit singletons and four hearts. Besides, why would declarer start clubs so soon, holding nine, inviting a defensive ruff? Play declarer for three hearts and finish defending.

**Sally:** I could exit with a high club.

# Better Bidding

Marty Bergen



## Preempts — we do it

(Excerpted from *Bergen's book, Marty Sez: Bergen's Bivy of Bridge Secrets.*)

You don't need two of the top three honors to open a weak two-bid — three out of five is just fine.

Suppose dummy has the lone ♥2 and you hold:

♥KQ6543 or  
 ♥QJ10987.

It would not shock me to take only three heart tricks with the first combination. Four tricks, however, are guaranteed with the second.

As dealer, open 2♥ at any vulnerability with

♠43 ♥KJ10932 ♦82 ♣KJT  
 or  
 ♠2 ♥AJ10864 ♦J975 ♣84.

### Bid one more

At favorable vulnerability, try to preempt one more than normal.

Too many players fail to appreciate the exquisite desirability of favorable vulnerability. When the scoring system minimizes your defeats while maximizing your victories, go for it.

You are the dealer on the following hands. Your opponents are vulnerable and you are not.

♠ J 10 8 7 5 4 ♥ 9 ♦ A 5 4 ♣ 8 6 2

Open 2♣, your jack-high suit notwithstanding. This weak two-bid follows the principle of bidding more than others would. You are bidding when they would have passed.

♠ 4 ♥ 9 7 ♦ K Q 9 8 6 3 ♣ 9 8 7 4

Open 3♦. Most players would open 2♦, but you want to "up the ante" at these colors. You are delighted to preempt at the higher level, because you are short in both majors.

♠ 8 4 ♥ Q J 10 9 7 6 2 ♦ — ♣ J 10 8 6

Open 4♥. You have only a seven-card suit, but your 7-4 shape and great spot cards suggest that you bid one more.

### Seven bad is good enough

Open a weak two-bid if the vulnerability is wrong for a three-level preempt.

Your preempt will still give partner useful information while disrupting your opponents. There is no law that says you must open a weak two-bid only with a six-card suit.

You are vulnerable. Your suits are too weak for a "normal" weak two-bid, but the seventh trump compensates.

♠ Q 5 ♥ K 5 ♦ Q 8 7 5 4 3 2 ♣ K 3

Open 2♦.

♠ Q 7 2 ♥ J 10 8 6 5 4 3 ♦ K 2 ♣ K

Open 2♥.

♠ A 9 7 6 5 3 2 ♥ 6 2 ♦ K 8 ♣ J 6

Open 2♠.

### A major on the side

Preempting with an outside four-card major is neither illegal nor stupid. This is

especially true when the major is weak and the long suit is strong.

As dealer, regardless of vulnerability:

♠ A ♥ J 5 3 2 ♦ Q J 10 8 6 5 ♣ 7 4

Open 2♦.

♠ 7 5 4 3 ♥ K Q 10 9 4 3 ♦ 5 ♣ K 3

Open 2♥.

♠ 9 ♥ 9 8 6 4 ♦ 9 ♣ K Q J 9 7 5 4

Open 3♠.

♠ A J 10 9 7 4 3 ♥ 8 5 3 2 ♦ 7 ♣ 5

Open 3♥.

If your four-card major is very strong, however, you should not preempt in first or second seat. Pass with:

♠ K 10 9 7 ♥ K Q 7 5 4 3 ♦ 8 6 ♣ 5.

### Eight is enough

In first and second seat a 4♥ or 4♠ preempt promises a weak hand with an eight-card suit.

Think of a four-level preempt as a "three bid" with an eighth trump.

Unfortunately, many players open 4♥ or 4♠ with a long major suit and an opening bid. This approach often silences the opponents and may even result in a normal contract.

It has, however, two major flaws. On many of these hands, you don't belong at the four level. On others, you will preempt partner out of a good slam.

♠ K Q J 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ 8 ♦ 9 ♣ Q 10 8

Open 4♠ with this perfect preempt, regardless of seat or vulnerability.

♠ A K J 9 8 4 2 ♥ — ♦ K 5 ♣ J 10 8 2

Open 1♠ in first or second seat. If partner is a passed hand, however, forget about slam and open 4♠.

### An Offer that's

too Good to Refuse

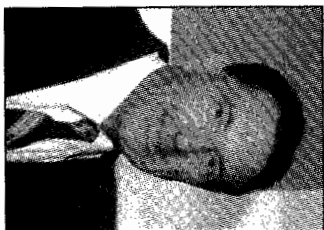
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# Chalk Talk

Eddie Kantar



### Play Tips

Here are tips to guide you as declarer.

- When a trump is led on the get-go, assume the opening leader does not have the queen and play accordingly.

♠ K 10

♥ 9 7 6 3

♠ A J 8 5 4 2

If West leads a low spade against your spade contract, play the king from dummy. East is marked with the queen and it may be singleton. If it is, you save a trick.

- When the opening leader makes a potentially ambiguous honor card lead — such as the jack, which could be top of a sequence or from the K-J-10 or A-J-10 — and you (declarer) have the A-K-Q, win the trick with the queen, the honor you are known to hold, regardless of what the lead shows.

- When an opponent shows out in a suit, conceal your strength by playing the highest immaterial card you can.

♥ 7 5 4

♠ K J 9 3

♥ A Q 10 8 6 2

♥ —

Hearts are trumps. When you lead a low heart from dummy, East shows out. As long as you don't intend to play the ace, play the queen, the highest immaterial card you can, to conceal the position from East. If you play a lower card, East will have a better feel for West's strength in the suit.

Do not ponder over your play. That may give East gratuitous information.

- Do not squander honor cards.

♠ A J 2

♠ K 9

♠ Q 5 4

♠ 10 8 7 6 3

If you need three spade tricks, lead low to dummy's jack. If West has K-x, the

ace will snatch the king and your queen is high. If you start with the queen, West covers and you have only two tricks.

♠ K 10 9 2

♠ A 8 7 6

♠ Q

For three tricks, start with a low spade intending to insert dummy's ♠ 10 if West plays low. Your play gains a trick when West has a singleton queen.

- Consider leading a spot card rather than an honor as an entry-conserving play.

♦ A J 10 2

♦ K 8 7 6

♦ Q 9 3

♦ 5 4

You need four diamond tricks and have no reentry to your hand. If you lead the queen and West plays low, you can take only three diamond tricks — after you repeat the finesse by leading low to the 10, you cannot get back to your hand to repeat the finesse.

Start by leading the ♠ 9. If West plays low, you can underplay with the ♠ 2 and then lead the ♠ Q for four diamond tricks.

♦ K 10 9 2

♦ Q 7 6 5

♦ J 8 3

♦ A 4

The lead is in your hand. You need three diamond tricks and have only one hand reentry. If you start with the ♠ J and West plays low, East wins the ace and now you cannot pick up West's queen with only one hand reentry.

If you lead the ♠ 8 and West plays low, underplay with the ♠ 2. If East wins the ace, you can return to your hand and lead the ♠ J, losing only one trick in the suit.

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