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# It's Just MayHem

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## Bidding over the opponents' preempts — part 2

Last month, general guidelines were presented regarding how to proceed over weak two-bids. Here are some more agreements that can help you cope.

Over a weak two-bid in a major, a jump to the four level in a minor suit is Leaping Michaels and shows at least 5-5 in the other major and the minor suit bid. Here's an example:

Opponent	You
2♥	4♣

Your 4♣ bid shows at least 5-5 in clubs and spades (the unbid major) and a good hand.

There are other cases. A jump cuebid of 4♦ over a weak 2♦ bid would show at least 5-5 in the majors. Bidding 4♠ over a weak 2♠ bid or 4♥ over a weak 2♥ bid shows a good hand with length in both minors.

The opponents may bid higher than the two level. The principles for bidding over weak two-bids also apply to bidding over three-level bids. Double if you want partner to pick a suit, but overcall if you wish to tell partner

that you have a good suit of your own. At these levels, both actions show good hands. It is important to remember that the higher the level, the more cooperative the double becomes (and more likely partner will pass for penalties).

In the balancing position, it is permissible to bid with shaded values when the opponents have stopped below game. Their failure to bid more tends to indicate that partner has some values, but had no clear-cut action in the direct position. After preemptive bids at the game level, however, the requirements to bid in the balancing position are about the same as in the direct position.

Time for a pop quiz. What do you call after an opponent opens 3♥, and you hold:

♠A Q 10 8 5 ♥6 2 ♦K Q 4 ♣8 7 6?

You should pass in the direct seat. In balancing position, however, you should bid 3♠. When the opponents stop in 3♥, you may assume partner has some values and it is safer to act.

An opponent bids 3♦ or 3♥. You hold:

♠A Q J 10 4 2 ♥4 ♦5 4 ♣A 10 4 2.

What would you do? With this hand, you should bid 3♠ in the direct seat, and you may bid an aggressive 4♠ in the balancing seat.

Suppose an opponent calls 3♠ and you hold:

♠6 5 ♥A Q J 10 8 3 ♦K J 2 ♣10 9.

In the direct seat, you should pass if the vulnerability is unfavorable, but bid 4♥ otherwise. In the pass-out seat, bid 4♥ (but if vulnerable against not, you have to decide how much risk you are willing to take).

There is no particular high-card requirement for overcalling a three-level preempt with 3NT. It may be a huge balanced hand, or it may be

somewhat less with a source of tricks (a long suit you think may run). At matchpoints, it may well depend upon how big a gambler you are. Again, position at the table will affect your decision.

A 4NT overcall of an opening 4♥ or 4♠ bid is for takeout — it is not intended as Blackwood or the unusual notrump. A 4NT overcall of 4♥ is more likely takeout for the minor suits as you could double for takeout if you also had support for spades. A 4NT overcall of 4♠ is takeout for either two or three suits, and thus partner should take extra care when responding by bidding the lowest suit in which he can play. Many play that a double of 4♠ is mostly for penalties as 4NT was available for takeout.

Here are some more examples:

An opponent opens 3♥ or 3♠, and you hold:

♠K 6 4 ♥A J 10 ♦K J 7 6 ♣K 10 6.

You should pass in the direct seat, but bid 3NT in the balancing seat. Do you see why? When the opponents stop in three of a major, it is more likely that partner has some scattered values.

Again, an opponent opens 3♥ or 3♠. You hold:

♠K 8 ♥A J 9 ♦J 10 ♣A K J 7 6 4.

Bid 3NT in either position. This hand is too strong to pass — you have more points and your club suit is a potential source of tricks. If it doesn't work, congratulate your opponents and move on.

An opponent opens 4♥ and you hold:

♠5 ♥4 ♦K Q J 10 9 ♣A Q J 9 8 7.

Bid 4NT in either position — this is a takeout for the minors. □