

Learning: Evaluating Your Hand After Partner's Preempt

A preemptive bid promises a seven card suit with little or no defensive tricks outside that suit. A typical preempt might look something like this:

♠ A K J 9 5 4 3

♥ 7

♦ J 4 2

♣ 6 3

Your partner would open 3 Spades. It typically shows a hand that will go down 2 or 3 tricks, in their own hand, if spades are trumps.

Given that description, let's look at how you, as their partner, should decide whether to Raise or Pass. To make it easy we are going to use spades as trumps, but of course a preempt can occur in any suit.

Most importantly, remember that it does not matter how many high card points you have. What matters is how many tricks you have. How many Aces, Kings, Ace/Queen combinations, King/Queen combinations will determine how many tricks you can take. If Partner opens three spades, they are telling you they think they will win six or seven tricks if spades are trumps. To make game partner needs to take ten tricks, therefore you need three or four tricks to raise them to game.

If partner preempts in a minor suit, think about 3NT as a possible game IF YOU HAVE A FIT WITH PARTNER.

Another possibility is that you will have length in the suit partner opened without a very good hand yourself. Now there is a possibility that the opponents might have enough points to make a game and you might want to raise partner's bid, not because you think you can make it, but because you want to try to keep your opponents from bidding.

If you have shortness in partner's suit – Pass.

What would you bid with the following hands after partner opens 3♠?

1)

♠ x x

♥ A K x x

♦ A x

♣ K Q x x x

Answer: Bid 4♠. You have just enough trick taking potential with your A K of hearts, A of diamonds and K Q of clubs to supply four trick for partner. It's close, but you should bid game.

2)

♠ x

♥ Q J x x x x

♦ A x x x

♣ K x

Answer: Pass. The chances of partner having a heart fit with you are poor and you do not have enough tricks to help partner make a game in Spades

3)

♠ x x x x

♥ A x x

♦ x x x

♣ Q x x

Answer: Bid 4♠. You should not expect that partner will make 4♠ but you do know that the opponents can probably make a game somewhere and that you and your partner will take one trick at most in spades if you are defending.

What would you bid with the following hands if your partner opens 3♦?

4)

♠ A x x x

♥ A K x

♦ x

♣ K J x x x

Answer: Pass. Your only possible game is 3NT. To make 3NT your partner would have to have AKQxxxx in his suit, or AKJxxxx and the Queen be in the right place for a finesse for you to make your contract. Any other holding and you will go down in 3NT. To make 5♦ you need eleven tricks. Partner will have no more than six or seven, you have three and ½...not enough tricks. Pass and hope the opponents bid so that you can set them.

5)

♠ x

♥ A x x x x

♦ K x x x

♣ K Q x

Answer: Bid 5♦. You will probably make 5♦ anytime partner has a singleton heart. If you don't make 5♦, the opponents would probably be able to make 4♠, so you will still get an excellent result.

6)

♠ K x x

♥ A Q x x

♦ Q x x

♣ A x x

Answer: Bid 3NT. You have a diamond fit that should help you and your partner take seven diamond tricks in NT, and two Aces, and the King of Spades as a stopper in spades....Your best game possibility is 3NT.