



by Steve & Mike
Oct 2, 2013 Tues Eve
6:30 PM Sharp!

When Partner Preempts by Steve Moese Tue 10/22

Board 1 ♠ A J 8 7 5 4 2

North ♥ 6

Deals ♦ 4

None Vul ♣ 8 7 6 4

♠ K 9 6

♥ 8 5 2

♦ Q J 7 5 3

♣ A 9



♠ 10 3

♥ K J 7 4 3

♦ A 10 8

♣ J 10 3

N E S W

3♠ P ?

When partner preempts in 1st or 2nd seat, how do we respond? Here's a great example from Tue Eve 10/22.

♠ Q

S 4♠; 4♣;

N 3♠; 3♣;

NS 1N; 1♥

♥ A Q 10 9

♦ K 9 6 2

♣ K Q 5 2

We need to agree the kind of hands partner might have. This should depend on **seat position**,

vulnerability, and **suit length/quality**.

Seat Position: What partner does in 1st seat is different than what they do in 2nd, 3rd or 4th seat:

1st Seat We will be a touch aggressive – there are 2 opponents and 1 partner who haven't spoken. The rest of the deck is split among them. The odds favor raising the auction so opponents can't bid easily.

2nd Seat Here the story changes. 1 opponent has passed. That leaves partner and the other opponents with the rest of the strength. We want to be **very disciplined** so we can describe our hand accurately to partner who will make the final decision for us.

3rd Seat Here we can be undisciplined. 2 people have passed and we have little except distribution. Clearly the 4th seat owns the hand. Our job is to make finding their fit and level as hard as possible.

4th Seat In 4th seat things change dramatically. To get a good score, 4th seat bids must make their contract. 3 people have passed. Our hand has distribution and no strength. Pass for a good board. If we go down, they get a plus score instead of zero (passed out).

Vulnerability impacts how aggressive we choose to be. Since the penalties for vulnerable undertricks are high, we adjust accordingly. One approach is to use the rule of 2-3-4. This is CONSERVATIVE by today's practice. A clear

10/22 – 99er Future Master Leaders

1st OA: Darleen Yooung & Natalie Crowe (61.9%)

2nd OA: Steven Simon & Garen Wisner (55.6%)

3rd OA: Peg Jervis & Pat Lindeman (54.4%)



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reference is better than no guideline at all. Here's how the Rule of 2-3-4 works: Count the number of losers in your hand and subtract from 13. These are the winners you expect. Then add the following number to your winner count to determine how high to bid:

Add:	We are	They Are
2 Tricks	Vulnerable	Not Vulnerable
3 Tricks	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
	Not Vulnerable	Not Vulnerable
4 Tricks	Not Vulnerable	Vulnerable

When we are **vulnerable** and they are not, if we go down 2 tricks doubled, we give them a better score than their game. (500 vs 420). When we are at **equal vulnerability**, a 2-trick set is a better score for us than their game (300 vs. 420, and 500 vs. 620). At **Favorable Vulnerability** (we are not vulnerable and they are vulnerable), we should be aggressive. Down 3-tricks doubled is less than their game (500 vs. 620).

♠ AJ87542
♥ 6
♦ 4
♣ 8764

Counting the North hand we see 7 losers (2♠, 1♥, 1♦, & 3♣S) and therefore 6 winners. At equal vulnerability we add 3 to our winners to get 9 tricks. 9 tricks are a 3♠ contract – we open 3♠ at **Equal Vulnerability**. I like 3♠.

No need to fool partner too much. We'd open 4♠ at **Favorable Vulnerability** in 1st seat, or give North the ♣K: ♠ AJ87542 ♥ 6 ♦ 4 ♣ K764 and we'd open 4♠ here. It's that close.

So what should responder do?

♠ Q South sees this hand. If you think along these lines: 16 HCP needs 10 HCP from partner, right? **THINK AGAIN.**
 ♥ A Q 10 9 Stop thinking about HCP. Once you know your side has a very long suit, start thinking about **TRICKS** instead.
 ♦ K 9 6 2
 ♣ K Q 5 2

Certainly the ♠Q is a valuable card given partner's preempt. We have agreed to play the Rule of 2-3-4. Partner has 3 losers to cover in order to make 9 tricks. Can partner have ♦A and ♠AK? **NO!** That's an opening 1-bid, not a 3-level preempt. We need 4 tricks (also called cover cards) for partner to make 4♣. Opposite a 3-level preempt, Aces and honors in partner's suit are sure tricks. Side suit-Kings aren't sure tricks. They require a supporting honor or an onside Ace to be a trick. We cannot be sure where the Aces are. We can't expect much from partner outside the trump suit.

We have the ♠Q, the ♥A as **certain winners**. Our **uncertain winners** are the ♣K, the ♥Q and the ♦K. The ♣KQ produces 2 tricks if the ♠A is onside, 1 trick otherwise. The ♦K produces a trick when the ♦A is onside, none otherwise. Likewise the ♥Q might be a trick if the ♥K is onside. That puts the ♥K and both missing Aces in East— too many eggs in one basket. We can surmise 1 or more of our needed card placements will be wrong.

Here's another way to value responder's hand. Mel Colchamiro proposes a **Rule of 17** to help decide what to do when partner preempts. **Add HCP to your number of trumps. If the total is 17 or more, bid game.** Here we hold exactly 17 (1♠ + 16 HCP). So whether to pass or bid 4 seems to be a close decision. Factors that support passing are that partner, not South, will be declaring so the ♦K might be at immediate risk (a ♦ lead from East). We might not have many entries to partner's hand so taking several finesses might be difficult. Nevertheless passing this hand is conservative – I expect most would bid 4 and they expect some help from the defense, a modest assumption.

Bd 1	Scores		MPs	
	NS	EW	NS	EW
4 ♠ N	420		4.3	0.7
4 ♠ N	420		4.3	0.7
3 ♠ N	170		2.5	2.5
3 ♠ N	140		1.3	3.7
4 ♠ N		50	0.1	4.9
4 ♠ N	420		3.88	0.13
3 ♦ x W	300		2.63	1.38
3 ♠ N	170		1.38	2.63
3 ♠ N	140		0.13	3.88

Double dummy, 4♣ goes down when North declares. East can lead the ♣J. This creates a loser for NS before declarer develops 10 winners. EW must come to 2♣s 1♦ and 1♠. Try it out! If West leads 1st, they can't lead any suit without giving up a trick or a tempo. If West leads a ♣, EW los a ♣ trick. If they led a ♦, they lose a ♣ trick (2 losing clubs pitch on the ♦K and ♥A. A ♠ lead allows declarer to pitch a losing ♦ from dummy on the ♥ A. **By the way, always assume perfect defense when declaring a hand. You'll be surprised how much your game will improve.**

Suit quality matters when we choose to preempt. Here is a view of great vs so-so 3-level preempts. (Think: 2-bids are 6 cards, 3-bids are 7 cards, and 4-bids are 8 cards).

Great	So-So...	Comment
♠ AJ87542 ♥6 ♦4 ♣8764	♠ AKQJ542 ♥6 ♦4 ♣8764	The weaker suit is a better 3♠ preempt. ♠AK means we have 1 or 2 defensive tricks, and might set their contract. Open 2♠. Don't invite partner to sacrifice by bidding 3♠. If they bid game and partner doubles, we'll be happy to pass with ♠AK. We have 7 tricks if partner can muster a 3N bid.
♠ QJ98742 ♥6 ♦4 ♣8764	♠ AKQJ542 ♥6 ♦4 ♣8764	Strongly prefer the weaker holding (left) for preempt. Strong intermediates count when knocking out their top honors.
♠ AJ87542 ♥6 ♦4 ♣8764	♠ AJ87542 ♥86 ♦64 ♣74	Left has 7 losers right has 8 losers. Beware the 7222 shape.
♠ AJ87542 ♥6 ♦4 ♣8764	♠ AJ87542 ♥8764 ♦4 ♣6	Left preempts 1 st 2 nd and 3 rd . Right preempts only 3 rd . 4♥s might miss a major suit fit.
♠ AJ87542 ♥6 ♦4 ♣8764	♠Q1098742 ♥6 ♦4 ♣AK64	Right has one Ace too many for 1 st and 2 nd seat preempts (deny 2 defensive tricks outside their suit). 3 rd seat? Go for it.
♠- ♥AKQJ98542 ♦4 ♣K76	♠ AJ87542 ♥6 ♦4 ♣8764	4th seat: Left has 9 ½ tricks and is worth a 4♥ opening. If our suit were ♠ we might open 1♠ and bid to 4 ourselves. With a lower ranking suit we do not want them to find their higher ranking fit. Pass out the right hand – too many losers. Opponents own this hand and we'll get a good score for zero.

For more on preempts see Andrew Gumperz Bridgewinners Series in the CBA Apr/July/Oct 2013 ALERTS.

Looking to improve your game? If you have an Intel Computer we highly recommend the free software offered by the ACBL and developed by Mr. Fred Gitelman. Check it out at: <https://web.acbl.org/LearnToPlayBridge/>