

COMPETING OVER PREEMPTS

When the opponents open the bidding with a two-level preempt, they can create a problem for you. Learning to effectively compete over these annoying bids is a mix of developing judgment and tools. You need to have good hand evaluation skills so that you can judge the risk and reward of competing. You also need to have good agreements with partner so that you can work together to describe your hands to the limited amount of space left in the building.

Jump Overcalls:

When the opponents preempt the bidding, you can use jump bids to show strong hands – remember you “do not preempt a preempt,” so a jump after the opponent’s preemptive opening is a strong action.

If your RHO opens the bidding 2 diamonds, then we have a way to show the following hand:

8 KQJ10743 A8 A109. Jump to 3 hearts showing about eight tricks and hoping to get to game if partner has a couple of useful cards.

With this hand, after 2 diamonds: 8 KQJ10743 A8 AK9

Jump to 4 hearts, expecting to make this contract if partner has one useful card.

With this hand, after 2 diamonds: KQJ83 AKJ108 K3 4

Jump to 4 diamonds. By jumping to 4 diamonds, we force partner to choose and get to a reasonable contract.

HAND EVALUATION – DISTRIBUTION

You can also stretch to fight your way into the auction when you have extra distribution.

The opponents open a preemptive 2 diamonds: You hold

Q10832 AQ832 K7 3

Although you only have 11 HCP, you want to compete in the bidding.

Start by overcalling our spade suit and plan to come back later and bid your heart suit if partner shows some values.

HAND EVALUATION – SUIT QUALITY

The first thing to know is that a simple overcall at the 2 level shows a good hand. When it comes to auctions that begin with a preempt from the opponents, you do need values to bid. Do not overcall 2 spades after a 2 heart opening bid with this hand:

AK9873 43 J43 94

You might have opened the bidding 2 spades if you had the chance. But when the Opponents preempt the bidding in front of you, you must pass with this hand. If you bid, partner will expect more than just a good suit, they will expect a good hand.

There are times when having a good suit allows you to stretch to come into the bidding. Imagine you pick up the following hand and your RHO opens the bidding 2 hearts.

KQJ973 43 AJ3 94

Here you should overcall 2 spades. (I would rather have more in vulnerable, though I would still make the bid). With such a good suit, you can stretch to fight your way into the auction.

COMPETITIVE BIDDING TOOLS – DOUBLE

When the opponents open the bidding with something like 1 heart, you can make a takeout double to show the other 3 suits (with a minimum of 3 cards in each) and roughly an opening hand. The same applies at the 2 level.

If RHO opens the bidding with 2 hearts, you can happily make a takeout double with:

A73 83 KQ73 KQ98