

The Foundation System

Part II. System Practice: Preemptive Bidding

REVIEW

Decisions involving preemptive opening bids are governed by LTC, suit texture, defensive strength, high-card strength, and potential for play in other suits or in notrump, as well as by vulnerability and position at the table; i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th seat. Whether to preempt or not is governed primarily by defensive strength, vulnerability, and the potential for play in other suits or in NT, while the level of preemption is governed by LTC and suit texture.

The choice between a weak two bid and a 1-level opening is based primarily upon HCP and the potential for game in other suits or notrump. In close cases it is often best to forego a 1H or 1S opening in order to discourage partner from stretching to bid a close game, especially if vulnerable. The 1D vs 2D decision depends mainly on notrump potential; 2D is usually preferred when holding 2 of the top 3 honors, but 1D might be chosen instead with potential for a major suit contract as well as for notrump. Similar considerations apply for the choice between a 1-level opening and a 3-level opening, but this choice occurs less frequently, since a HCP holding sufficient to consider a 1-level opening will usually have too much defensive strength to consider a 3-level opening, except of course in 3rd seat, where you might be trying to tempt the opponents into bidding an unmakeable game.

The choice between a 3-level opening and a weak two bid will usually depend upon LTC, vulnerability, and position at the table. The System discourages 3-level openings with a 6-card suit, so that choice should usually be made only in 3rd seat, with good texture, favorable vulnerability and poor defense. Suit texture is especially important for 3S bids, because with lots of HCP and not much shape, the opponents will often choose to double rather than to venture to the 4-level with uncertain prospects.

The 3-level vs 4-level decision is usually controlled by LTC and vulnerability, but 4C and 4D will almost never be chosen if there is notrump potential. Tactical considerations come into play for such decisions when your suit is a major, where your estimate of the likelihood of the opponents having a game in the other major, or a reasonable sacrifice against your potential game will influence your decision.

Tactical considerations are of primary importance in responding to partner's 3-level openings. Because partner's defensive strength can be assumed to be minimal, it is often easier to estimate the opponents' game prospects than your own. Advance sacrifices and 2-way shots, where you're fairly sure that at least one pair at the table can make a game, can, and do, occur frequently.

QUIZ 1: Opening 2D Bids

Your Hand	HCP/LTC	Auction	Your Call
(1) ♠ 10 ♥ 753 ♦ KQ9864 ♣ A108	___/___	?	___
(2) ♠ 1085 ♥ 108 ♦ KJ10654 ♣ A6	___/___	?	___
(3) ♠ 9 ♥ K ♦ AQ5432 ♣ Q8432	___/___	?	___
(4) ♠ 753 ♥ K8 ♦ AK8432 ♣ 52	___/___	?	___
(5) ♠ K4 ♥ Q62 ♦ KJ10852 ♣ Q6	___/___	?	___
(6) ♠ 4 ♥ J10 ♦ AQJ732 ♣ 10762	___/___	?	___
(7) ♠ 9 ♥ 10 ♦ AQJ642 ♣ KJ754	___/___	?	___
(8) ♠ 54 ♥ A3 ♦ KQ8654 ♣ Q73	___/___	?	___
(9) ♠ A53 ♥ Q ♦ KQ10987 ♣ 964	___/___	?	___
(10) ♠ - ♥ 953 ♦ AK10762 ♣ J1086	___/___	?	___

QUIZ 1: DISCUSSION

- (1) (9/7) [HCP/LTC] A fairly typical 2D, with 2 defensive tricks (DT) and decent texture.
- (2) (8/8) Try 2D only if not vulnerable or in 3rd seat, mainly as a lead director.
- (3) (11/5) Too good to pass, but not a good 1D bid, so I'd open 2D, counting on the club suit to compensate for the terrible texture.
- (4) (10/7) Too much defense for 2D. I'd pass rather than open 1D, because this will be a good overcall if they open, and a good 2/1 if partner opens.
- (5) (11/7) This is an absolute maximum 2D opening.
- (6) (8/8) And this is about an absolute minimum 2D, despite the LTC=7 instead of 8.
- (7) (11/5) Unlike hand (3), this is a good 1D opening, too strong for 2D.
- (8) (11/6) Despite the good LTC, 2D will work better than 1D here. The extra possible club entry can compensate for the poor texture.
- (9) (11/7) This is only worth 1D if the HQ is useful, so open 2D so partner understands that you have excellent NT potential. You'll rarely have better texture than this.
- (10) (8/7) A weak two with a void is rarely a good idea. This would be a good dummy in a club or heart contract, so I'd bid 2D only in 3rd seat. In other seats, it's best to pass and listen to the bidding.

QUIZ 2: Opening 2H & 2S Bids

Your Hand	HCP/LTC	Auction	Your Call
(11) ♠ J107 ♥ KQJ1096 ♦ K10 ♣ 43	___/___	?	___
(12) ♠ 9 ♥ KJ10862 ♦ A65 ♣ J76	___/___	?	___
(13) ♠ - ♥ AQJ1082 ♦ 10854 ♣ 964	___/___	?	___
(14) ♠ 72 ♥ AKQJ63 ♦ 1094 ♣ J2	___/___	?	___
(15) ♠ Q97 ♥ QJ10943 ♦ A104 ♣ Q	___/___	?	___
(16) ♠ 6 ♥ Q109632 ♦ A6 ♣ A1092	___/___	?	___
(17) ♠ AQJ984 ♥ - ♦ Q109 ♣ 10987	___/___	?	___
(18) ♠ KQ1098 ♥ 7 ♦ A63 ♣ J1084	___/___	?	___
(19) ♠ Q97654 ♥ 94 ♦ AJ97 ♣ 7	___/___	?	___
(20) ♠ K98763 ♥ 1083 ♦ KQ ♣ J6	___/___	?	___

QUIZ 2: DISCUSSION

(11) (10/7) 2H of course. I'd even consider 3H if not vulnerable in 3rd seat.

(12) (9/8) A typical 2H bid, even if a slight stretch when vulnerable.

(13) (7/7) Looks tempting, but don't bid 2H. This will be a great dummy if pard can scrape up a minor suit overcall after they open 1S, so I'd pass this one.

(14) (11/7) Bid 2H and rebid 3NT over a 2NT response, or 2NT over a 2S response, in order to show the solid suit.

(15) (11/7) You must open this hand, but it lacks the defensive strength for 1H, so this is the time to violate the A or K requirement and open 2H.

(16) (10/6) No need to violate the System here, since this is worth a 1H opening (barely).

(17) (9/6) Like (13), this is a good Pass because of the minor suit potential. If you can't resist the temptation to bid, go all the way with a 3S bid.

(18) (10/7) 2S is permissible with a 5-card suit this good, but is not obligatory, since you can always pass and hope to overcall 1S later. With AK3 in diamonds instead of A63, I'd even open 2S in 4th seat.

(19) (7/7) Lacking the A or K, I'd pass this one, but might open 2S in 3rd seat.

(20) (9/8) 2S is OK (good texture), but in 1st or 2nd seat, Pass is best in case pard can open.

QUIZ 3: 3-Level Opening Bids

Your Hand	HCP/LTC	Auction	Your Call
(21) ♠ 83 ♥ AKQ10975 ♦ 762 ♣ 5	___/___	?	___
(22) ♠ K52 ♥ KQJ9843 ♦ J4 ♣ 5	___/___	?	___
(23) ♠ J42 ♥ Q1097643 ♦ A42 ♣ -	___/___	?	___
(24) ♠ A ♥ Q875432 ♦ 875 ♣ A8	___/___	?	___
(25) ♠ - ♥ AK109832 ♦ J73 ♣ QJ4	___/___	?	___
(26) ♠ 8 ♥ KQJ10872 ♦ A64 ♣ 108	___/___	?	___
(27) ♠ 9843 ♥ KJ107542 ♦ - ♣ K2	___/___	?	___
(28) ♠ 8 ♥ QJ1097653 ♦ AQ6 ♣ 9	___/___	?	___
(29) ♠ K8 ♥ J1098765 ♦ K10 ♣ K6	___/___	?	___
(30) ♠ A4 ♥ 10987432 ♦ 2 ♣ A98	___/___	?	___

QUIZ 3: DISCUSSION

(21) (9/6) A classical 3H bid. Perhaps even 4H at favorable vulnerability.

(22) (10/6) This is a more typical sound 3H bid.

(23) (7/7) A good 3H bid, except at unfavorable vulnerability.

(24) (10/6) 3H is safe enough, despite the poor texture, but too much defense because of the two aces, so 1H is best.

(25) (11/6) A bit too much defense for 3H, but 4H is fine. If the suit were spades, I'd try 1S.

(26) (10/6) A sound 3H, but worth 4H if not vulnerable.

(27) (7/6) Open 3H and don't worry about missing a 44 spade fit. Vulnerable chickens might settle for 2H.

(28) (9/5) This is a good 4H bid at any vulnerability.

(29) (10/6) Play your hunch. Pass, 3H, or 2H could be best. I'd open 3H in 1st or 3rd seat, and 2H in 4th seat, but in 2nd seat I'd pass because of the greater chance that LHO has aces sitting over my kings.

(30) (8/7) Even a suit this weak is worth a non-vulnerable 3H, but try 2H if vulnerable.

QUIZ 4: 3-Level (& Higher) Opening Bids

Your Hand	HCP/LTC	Auction	Your Call
(31) ♠ 5 ♥ 103 ♦ AQ9875432 ♣ J	___/___	?	___
(32) ♠ J64 ♥ - ♦ A7 ♣ KJ1098632	___/___	?	___
(33) ♠ 1085 ♥ J10 ♦ AKJ10754 ♣ 3	___/___	?	___
(34) ♠ Q6 ♥ A932 ♦ KJ98654 ♣ -	___/___	?	___
(35) ♠ KQJ10964 ♥ J ♦ 962 ♣ A8	___/___	?	___
(36) ♠ AQJ10653 ♥ 6 ♦ 9865 ♣ 6	___/___	?	___
(37) ♠ 973 ♥ 6 ♦ K2 ♣ AJ107642	___/___	?	___
(38) ♠ 73 ♥ 32 ♦ 84 ♣ AKQ10975	___/___	?	___
(39) ♠ QJ10 ♥ 3 ♦ 73 ♣ AQ109842	___/___	?	___
(40) ♠ A83 ♥ 72 ♦ J ♣ KQ98752	___/___	?	___

QUIZ 4: DISCUSSION

(31) (7/5) 3NT will be down lots unless your suit runs, so 4D (maybe even 5D) is best.

(32) (9/6) 3NT is unlikely, so opt for maximum preemption via 4C.

(33) (9/7) Try 3D because of good 3NT prospects.

(34) (10/6) Open 1D instead of 3D because 4H is a more likely spot than 3NT.

(35) (11/6) No need to preempt when you hold the boss suit. Open 1S and don't sell out below 3S even if pard remains silent.

(36) (7/6) This is a good 3S bid at any vulnerability.

(37) (8/7) Modest 3NT hopes make this a minimum 3C opening if not vulnerable.

(38) (9/6) Try 3C purely for preemption. Pard won't move toward 3NT with no fitting honor. In 1st or 2nd seat, this is worth 3NT if you play it Gambling.

(39) (9/6) 3C is obviously OK here, but it might be best to pass and overcall because you have a bit more defense than pard will expect.

(40) ((10/6) This is worth 3C because of the 3NT prospects. If pard bids a red suit, I'd rebid 3S to steer him toward 3NT if he can handle both red suits.

QUIZ 5: Responding to Weak 2D Openings

Your Hand	HCP/LTC	Auction	Your Call
(41) ♠ AKJ3 ♥ Q7 ♦ Q3 ♣ A10872	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(42) ♠ QJ9643 ♥ K974 ♦ A3 ♣ 2	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(43) ♠ AQJ74 ♥ KQ86 ♦ - ♣ KQ96	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(44) ♠ AKJ7 ♥ K9 ♦ Q5 ♣ KJ1084	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(45) ♠ K95 ♥ 875 ♦ K72 ♣ AQ52	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(46) ♠ 107 ♥ A ♦ AQ74 ♣ AJ10873	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(47) ♠ 3 ♥ K852 ♦ A1042 ♣ AJ108	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(48) ♠ 4 ♥ 74 ♦ J93 ♣ AQ76532	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(49) ♠ AKJ94 ♥ AQ984 ♦ AJ ♣ 9	___/___	2D/P/?	___
(50) ♠ A9863 ♥ K3 ♦ 10953 ♣ J7	___/___	2D/P/?	___

QUIZ 5: DISCUSSION

(41) (16/7) Conservatives will bid 2NT and play 3NT only if pard responds 3H. Cowboys will bid a direct 3NT, gambling that they won't find a killing heart lead. I'm a cowboy.

(42) (10/6) Try 2S, and bid an aggressive 4S if pard shows 3-card support.

(43) (17/3) Pass quickly, and hope they compete.

(44) (17/6) 3NT will usually have a good play, so bid it.

(45) (12/8) Possible bids are Pass, 2NT, 3NT, and 3D. If you pass, and they bid 2H or 2S, you'll want to bid 3D anyway, so you might as well try 2NT or 3D immediately.

(46) (15/5) 5D won't always make, but bid it directly anyway. 2NT or 3C will only help them find the best lead.

(47) (12/7) 4D is about right here, but 2NT could be right if pard can show the heart ace.

(48) (7/7) 3D should be safe, but bid 3C now, to get a club lead when they play it.

(49) (19/4) Start with 3S and follow with 4H over a 3D rebid. If pard can't support either major, you'll settle for 5D.

(50) (8/8) This is a routine 3D raise, perhaps worth 4D at favorable vulnerability.

QUIZ 6: Responding to Weak 2H & 2S Openings

Your Hand	HCP/LTC	Auction	Your Call
(51) ♠ Q1052 ♥ Q9754 ♦ K108 ♣ 10	___/___	2H/P/?	___
(52) ♠ J8 ♥ KQ ♦ A109874 ♣ Q82	___/___	2H/P/?	___
(53) ♠ K ♥ J98 ♦ J982 ♣ AK1093	___/___	2H/P/?	___
(54) ♠ AKQ84 ♥ 752 ♦ 873 ♣ A10	___/___	2H/P/?	___
(55) ♠ A8 ♥ 742 ♦ Q84 ♣ AQ765	___/___	2H/P/?	___
(56) ♠ AK972 ♥ K65 ♦ 4 ♣ KJ103	___/___	2H/P/?	___
(57) ♠ 1097642 ♥ J64 ♦ A ♣ AKQ	___/___	2H/P/?	___
(58) ♠ J65 ♥ AK87 ♦ 102 ♣ AK104	___/___	2S/P/?	___
(59) ♠ QJ86 ♥ AK975 ♦ K ♣ J105	___/___	2S/P/?	___
(60) ♠ 96 ♥ KJ82 ♦ AJ93 ♣ AJ10	___/___	2S/P/?	___

QUIZ 6: DISCUSSION

(51) (7/7) Just bid 4H, hoping to pressure them into a 43 spade fit.

(52) (12/7) Try 2NT. If pard's side strength is in a minor, 4H may make.

(53) (12/8) 3H is enough. You have fair defense against a spade contract.

(54) (13/7) Just bid 4H. No need to try 2S or 2NT; let them guess what to lead.

(55) (12/7) Try 2NT and stop in 3H unless pard shows a club feature.

(56) (14/6) An immediate 4H may keep them from finding a good diamond sacrifice.

(57) (14/6) We're unlikely to lose more than 2 spades and a heart, so bid 4H directly. Don't help them defend by starting with 2S or 2NT.

(58) (15/7) We don't fear 4H, so a sly 3D might avoid a diamond lead against the 4S you will bid on the next round.

(59) (14/7) You expect to end in 4S, but starting with 2NT can't hurt, in case someone has a 5-card heart suit and gets too frisky. Give them room to bid if you'd welcome competition.

(60) (14/8) You have good defense against any opposing contract, so you can pass and await developments, but at favorable vulnerability you might consider a raise to 3S. This usually convinces the opponents that it's their hand, and you'll double anything they bid.

QUIZ 7: Responding to 3C & 3D Openings

Your Hand	HCP/LTC	Auction	Your Call
(61) ♠ 98 ♥ KQ104 ♦ A762 ♣ K83	___/___	3C/P/?	___
(62) ♠ AQ843 ♥ AKJ5 ♦ KQ3 ♣ 6	___/___	3C/P/?	___
(63) ♠ AK86 ♥ Q82 ♦ K653 ♣ K4	___/___	3C/P/?	___
(64) ♠ KJ6 ♥ A9 ♦ AKQJ6 ♣ K109	___/___	3C/P/?	___
(65) ♠ - ♥ Q10987653 ♦ 43 ♣ AJ9	___/___	3C/P/?	___
(66) ♠ J9752 ♥ A9 ♦ Q9 ♣ K1094	___/___	3D/P/?	___
(67) ♠ 53 ♥ AKJ ♦ AQ754 ♣ AJ9	___/___	3D/P/?	___
(68) ♠ A85 ♥ AKJ7532 ♦ 85 ♣ 9	___/___	3D/P/?	___
(69) ♠ AK4 ♥ QJ105 ♦ KJ ♣ A1082	___/___	3D/P/?	___
(70) ♠ AK85 ♥ Q92 ♦ 10952 ♣ AK	___/___	3D/P/?	___

QUIZ 7: DISCUSSION

(61) (12/7) Bid 3D. Then over 3H, 5D will be cold; over 3S, 3NT will usually make, and you can safely pass a 4C rebid.

(62) (19/4) 3NT will not be making, so bid 5C and hope pard can make it, or pass and hope they compete.

(63) (15/6) A direct 3NT is best. They may beat it, but they have to find the right lead first.

(64) (21/5) 6NT will usually make, but try 4NT first in case pard has 2 aces (or in case he's a cowboy and doesn't have any aces).

(65) (7/6) You want to play 4H, but an immediate 4H is a slam try, so you have to start with 3H and rebid 4H to shut partner up.

(66) (10/8) Bid 3H and rebid 3NT over 3S, or pass a 3NT rebid, which shows a club stop.

(67) (19/6) Bid 3H, and bid 6D over a 3S rebid, or 5D over any other rebid.

(68) (12/6) 4H will usually be easier than 5D, so bid 3H and rebid 4H. If he has a heart void, he may go back to 5D, and that should have a decent chance.

(69) (18/6) I'd just settle for 3NT here. Pard needs too many specific cards to think of slam.

(70) (16/6) 5D will usually have a good chance, but it won't hurt to bid 3H first in hopes of scaring off a heart lead.

QUIZ 8: Responding to 3H & 3S Openings

Your Hand	HCP/LTC	Auction	Your Call
(71) ♠ KQ5 ♥ AQ ♦ AK1095 ♣ K107	___/___	3H/P/?	___
(72) ♠ J742 ♥ J73 ♦ KQ4 ♣ AJ8	___/___	3H/P/?	___
(73) ♠ AKQ53 ♥ J4 ♦ J65 ♣ KQ7	___/___	3H/P/?	___
(74) ♠ AQJ107 ♥ 4 ♦ AQ984 ♣ KJ	___/___	3H/P/?	___
(75) ♠ J95 ♥ K52 ♦ A6 ♣ K10852	___/___	3H/P/?	___
(76) ♠ K974 ♥ 2 ♦ AQJ102 ♣ Q87	___/___	3S/P/?	___
(77) ♠ K ♥ AQ873 ♦ K1085 ♣ A82	___/___	3S/P/?	___
(78) ♠ KQ3 ♥ K106 ♦ 1043 ♣ KJ75	___/___	3S/P/?	___
(79) ♠ 432 ♥ 972 ♦ A108 ♣ AQ42	___/___	3S/P/?	___
(80) ♠ QJ84 ♥ QJ ♦ K853 ♣ 74	___/___	3S/P/?	___

QUIZ 8: DISCUSSION

(71) (21/5) His hearts are weak, so there's a good chance he'll have 2 keycards. So try 4NT RKC and bid 6H if he has them.

(72) ((12/9) Just Pass, and hope pard can make it.

(73) (16/6) Bid 4H if vulnerable, but Pass if not vulnerable.

(74) (17/4) It's a guess, but 4H will make often enough that you ought to bid it.

(75) (11/8) Here you bid 4H as a 2-way shot; they can probably make 4S.

(76) (12/6) 4S is obvious here. They can probably make 4H, and we'll usually make 4S.

(77) (16/6) Bid 4S confidently with at least 3 cover cards, perhaps 5.

(78) (12/8) With 3 or 4 cover cards, 4S is probably making, and 4H could be making, too.

(79) (10/9) Just Pass. Maybe they'll bid 4H and lose 2 clubs, a diamond, and a heart.

(80) (9/8) 4S is obvious here. At favorable vulnerability, I'd try 5S, since they may have a slam. Make them start guessing at the 6-level.