

The Right Bid

AT THE RIGHT TIME

NEIL KIMELMAN

AUTHOR OF "IMPROVE YOUR BIDDING JUDGMENT"

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FOREWORD

My first two books were well received. They were successful in helping change the readers' bidding mindsets. The books helped change the focus for intermediate and advanced players from:

*The What = Conventions
to
The Why = Judgment*

My third effort continues this emphasis.

Others with a background in the Adult Learning field know that it usually takes more than one 'intervention' for a student to learn and integrate behavior. Each endeavor builds on the previous efforts. So in the approach for this book I have adopted a straight quiz format, with a number of deals in a row on the same theme. The solutions, which follow immediately, include:

- The recommended bid
- What are the also-rans and why none of them is the best choice
- The full deal (they all come from real life)
- The theme or learning that can be taken from this problem, and applied to future similar situations
- A summary of the key learnings in each category

At the start of each themed chapter I discuss important concepts and common misunderstandings on each subject. So in other words, I want to help you learn how to make better choices, recognize applicable situations, and apply the learning at the table in real time.

Neil Kimelman
March, 2016

QUIZ CATEGORIES

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Chapter 1

PREEMPTS

I am going to divide this subject into two chapters. In the problems and solutions for this one, I will discuss the three ‘Ws’ of preempting:

- Which hands to open with a preempt
- Why we preempt and why we don’t
- When is it right to preempt?

The next chapter will focus on what to do when the opponents or partner preempt. This is a very important subject, and with the increasing frequency of preempting, there are lots of opportunities to win matchpoints and IMPs when you have a good understanding of this topic.

IN GENERAL

A theme that I have emphasized in my other books is the importance of letting partner know what you have, even if it means allowing the opponents in on that information. Preempting is a little schizophrenic. In first and second seats we want to be constructive in our approach. We should have close to what your agreements say we should hold. However, in third seat partner has already had a chance to bid. Thus it is okay to mislead partner, as he is likely to be less affected than the fourth-seat opponent. In third seat your agreements should lean towards lighter hand types, and you can even stray from length and outside strength. Finally, if it goes three passes to you, all preempts are very constructive — if you just hold a weak hand with a long suit you should pass the hand out.

THE ‘V’ WORD

Of course we have to talk about the ‘V’ word. Yes — vulnerability. This is a major factor in your decision-making, and preempting should

be approached with care when your side is vulnerable. In contrast, favorable vulnerability is a license to bid. The opponents will be more focused on declaring when making a game will score +600 or more, whereas defending a sacrifice may only get them +300. An additional danger is that with a good declarer or a minor defensive misstep, that +300 could become +100 or even -750. This is called ‘declarer’s advantage’.

TABOOS

Here are three rules I follow when deciding whether or not to preempt.

- *Don’t open a weak two with two aces.* It is too hard for partner to judge when to sacrifice, and it dramatically decreases the odds the opponents can make any high-level contract. This rule applies equally to a three-level preempt. Of course in third seat all bets are off (but I still probably wouldn’t do it!).
- *Don’t open a weak two with a hand worth an opening bid.* You will often see this done, usually to the detriment of the weak two-bidder’s side. At the other table(s) most players will open the same hand at the one-level, and dramatically change the auction. You will miss games or the opponents will more likely enter the auction successfully with partner doing the wrong thing. Here are some examples of hands I consider opening bids, not preempts.

♠ A K 10 x x x ♥ K x x ♦ x ♣ x x x
 ♠ J 10 x x ♥ x x x ♦ A K Q x x x ♣ —
 ♠ A x x ♥ x x ♦ x ♣ A J 10 9 x x x
 ♠ A K 10 x x x ♥ x x ♦ Q 10 9 x x ♣ —

Do not value quacks, stiff kings, and the like. These cards tend to take tricks on defense and are useless on offense. If you have a hand like:

♠ Q J 10 x x x ♥ Q x x ♦ K ♣ Q x x

just pass.

HAND 1

Both vulnerable, at teams, you hold as South:

♠ K 8 4 3 ♥ A J 10 8 7 2 ♦ 9 5 4 ♣ —

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		pass	?

What do you bid?

HAND 2

Neither vulnerable, at IMPs, as South you hold:

♠ A K J 9 7 5 2 ♥ 10 5 2 ♦ J 4 ♣ 2

What do you bid as dealer?

SOLUTION — HAND 1

Both vulnerable, at teams, you hold as South:

♠ K 8 4 3 ♥ A J 10 8 7 2 ♦ 9 5 4 ♣ —

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		pass	?

What do you bid?

You have 8 HCP and a void. Is this enough to open at the one-level? I would say no. Even light opening bidders probably would not consider this hand an opener. There are two other adverse factors:

- You are in second seat, which means that there is an equal chance of misleading partner as there is of misleading West.
- You are vulnerable.

I actually would likely open if we were playing Flannery. This describes your hand pretty well, and you can rest comfortably with any decision partner makes.

What about opening 2♥? Many books disdain opening a weak two with four cards in the other major. The reasoning is twofold. First, you may easily miss a superior fit in your shorter major. Second, there is less chance that the opponents have a fit in your secondary major. Plus partner may take an advance sacrifice with short spades, thinking the opponents have a big fit there.

I don't follow this rule, as I believe there is more chance of disrupting the opponents' bidding than of partner being detrimentally affected by this distributional feature. This particular hand produced my most successful result from this theory — I chose to open 2♦ (Multi, showing a weak two in an unspecified major) at the 2012 Canadian Bridge Championships. What happened after that is something that bidding theorists do not cover.

	♠ 10 6										
	♥ K Q										
	♦ A Q J 7 2										
	♣ K 7 4 2										
♠ A Q 7 5 2	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;"> </td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 9
	N										
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♥ —		♥ 9 6 5 4 3									
♦ 10 6		♦ K 8 3									
♣ A Q J 10 9 5		♣ 8 6 3									
	♠ K 8 4 3										
	♥ A J 10 8 7 2										
	♦ 9 5 4										
	♣ —										

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	2NT ²	pass	2♦ ¹
dbl	4♣ ⁴	pass	3♣ ³
4♠	dbl	all pass	4♦ ⁵

1. A weak two in one of the majors (Multi).
2. Asking.
3. Maximum.
4. Transfer me into your suit.
5. I have hearts.

West reasonably decided to come in once he was able to show his clubs by doubling 3♣, and then bid his spades at the four-level. He came to regret his decisions.

Partner led the ♥K, which declarer ruffed. He then played the ♠A and a spade to the jack, which I won to play another heart. Declarer had lost control of the hand, and ended up down five for -1400.

Despite our partners letting 4♥ make North-South (it should be down one), we won a big double-digit swing on this board.

LESSONS TO LEARN

- 1) Whether to preempt, like a lot of bidding decisions, involves weighing the pros and cons of each action and deciding which one in the long run will have the highest rate of success.

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ADVANCED

THE FINE ART OF DECISION-MAKING

This book completes the trilogy that began with *Improve Your Bidding Judgment* and continued with *The Thin Fine Line*. It explores the delicate process of making more of the right decisions in the auction, especially in competitive situations. Examples are taken from high-level bridge events, and are presented in quiz format, so that you can make your own call before the options are discussed and the author's recommendation presented.

Praise for earlier books in this series:

'Overall, the book does exactly what it says on the cover – helps you improve your bidding judgment.' **Julian Pottage**

'Recommended as a gift for your favorite bridge player.'
The New York Times

'Great advice delivered in easily comprehensible form and backed by well-chosen examples.' **The National Post**



NEIL KIMELMAN (Winnipeg, Canada) is a Canadian expert who is playing much more top-level bridge since his retirement. This is his third book.



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