

PREEMPTS

Here are some sample weak 2's in diamonds. Talk to partner about style!

1. The classic beauty ♠8 ♥A97 ♦KQJT73 ♣T63
2. Solid ♠T6 ♥97 ♦KQT972 ♣K72
3. One suited ♠83 ♥982 ♦KQJT93 ♣54
4. Six but mixed ♠K6 ♥Q3 ♦K98743 ♣T64
5. Frisky 5 bagger ♠7 ♥T65 ♦KQ962 ♣JT73

Which of the above hands would I open a weak 2? The answer is that it depends on which seat I am in, and what the vulnerability is. I would always open the classic beauty no matter the conditions, but the others I would evaluate.

	1 st Seat	2 nd Seat	3 rd Seat	4 th Seat
Neither Vul	1-3	1-3	1-4 (maybe 5)	none
Both Vul	1-3	1-2	1-3	none
Favorable	1-4	1-3	1-5	none
Unfavorable	1-2	1	1-3	none

Second Seat is the most conservative position. Your right hand opponent passed, so it becomes far more likely that it is your hand. You want to make preempts that partner can count on. This is especially true vulnerable.

Third Seat non-vulnerable is the most aggressive position. When you have a really bad hand, and the first two players have passed, it becomes clear that the 4th player to bid is likely to have at least an opening bid and probably on that is well above average.

Reasons to Make a Preempt

1. **Description.** This is the most important reason. You have a six card suit and a hand that does not have enough HCP to open. You have bids available in diamonds, hearts, and clubs at the two level that describe your hand in one bid.
2. **Taking up space in the auction.** Preempts create problems for your opponents. Even the 2♦ preempt can cause big problems for an opponent. What would you do holding:
 - a. ♠KJ ♥AQJ7 ♦T6 ♣AJ432
3. **Lead direction.** This is especially true in third chair. This is why we can open 2♦ in 3rd chair at favorable with Frisky 5-bagger. The opponents are a big favorite to bid spades, and that looks like the winning lead for our side.
4. **Suggesting a sacrifice.** We don't want to do this frequently, but often when we are at favorable vulnerability, it can be a good idea to bid (for instance) 5♦ over 4 of a major. Keep in mind that you're betting on a trifecta when you take a deliberate sacrifice:
 - a. Everyone else in the field is bidding the game your opponents did
 - b. You're definitely not beating it on defense
 - c. You're not going to go for too much doubled (down 4 for -800)

Responding to Partner's Pre-empt

First of all, new suits by responder in standard are forcing (RONF = RaiseOnlyNonForce). Partner should not pass unless you have the agreement to play these bids as non-forcing (and the non-forcing new suit must be alerted). You need a really good hand to bid a new suit after a preempt:

♠ AKT982 ♥ AQ4 ♦ 8 ♣ KT6

This looks like a minimum 2♠ bid after partner opens 2♦. You might make 4♠ or 3NT, but partner's bid showing a lot of stuff in diamonds should make you pessimistic.

When should you bid 3♦?

After 2♦ - (pass) - ??

3♦ is extending the preempt and can be bid on a wide variety of hands.

♠ KJ6 ♥ Q762 ♦ T52 ♣ AJ3 – middle of the road raise. You're not making a game opposite 2♦, but you also don't have enough defense to beat a 2 level major suit contract. Bid 3♦.

♠ T2 ♥ 76 ♦ K62 ♣ KQ9642 – they probably have a game. Bid at least 3♦. At favorable, it is probably worth 4♦ (that takes away a cue bid for the majors at the four level).

♠ AQ72 ♥ AK32 ♦ 9 ♣ KJ82 – you have a lot of points, but 3NT is a bad idea. Pass would be reasonable; you also might try bidding 3♦ and then doubling if the opponents compete.

When shouldn't you bid 3♦?

- a. Definitely not after you pass the first time! Which auction would you rather be on lead for?
 - i. (2♦)-p-(3♦) –p; p-p
 - ii. (2♦)-p-(p)-2♠; p-p-3♦
- b. It is far less attractive to extend the pre-empt when your RHO has made a bid. For instance:
 - i. ♠ 8 ♥ K762 ♦ AK4 ♣ Q7642
 - ii. The above hand is definitely worth 3♦ if right hand opponent had passed, but if RHO bids 2♠, you might talk them into a game that they otherwise wouldn't bid if you try 3♦.
- c. You shouldn't bid 3♦ if you're the preemptor!

- i. Bid to the level you should on the first round and be done with it. Trying to play these hands after the opponents have exchanged information is dangerous.

A Neat Convention Called McCabe

- After the auction starts 2♦/♥/♠ by your partner and RHO opponent doubles, it becomes much less likely that you'd want to bid a forcing new suit (which we stated above needs to be really good!)
- You also have redouble available when you have a misfit with partner's hand and good defense behind the doubler; you can collect some nice penalties on these hands!
 - Misfits defend wonderfully and play horribly.
- The McCabe convention states that a new suit over the double is **purely for lead direction. Because of that, you promise tolerance for partner's preempt.**
 - ♠ Q7 ♥T642 ♦Q87 ♣AKJ2
 - McCabe players can bid 3♣ over the double to get partner off to the club lead if they end up playing a spade contract. Players who don't play McCabe will bid 3♦, and partner will probably lead a diamond.

A Few Other Rules That Steve Follows When It Comes To Preempts

1. I never preempt with two aces.
2. I never preempt in hearts or diamonds with 4 spades on the side.
 - a. I do occasionally preempt in diamonds with 4 small hearts on the side (♥8742). This is because I live in perpetual fear of spades! If the hearts are as good as Jxxx, I would not preempt.
3. I will vary the strength of my weak jump overcalls opposite a passed hand
 - a. You can have a little more when partner is passed. If you are vulnerable, you should have a lot more! These bids are dangerous once the opponents have opened at the one level.
 - b. Lots of expert partnerships (Pam and Jim, for instance) have stopped playing 3 level jump overcalls as weak when vulnerable. The bid is too dangerous to make with a classic preempt. They instead play that a 3 level jump is intermediate in strength with a good six card suit; purely descriptive.