



# Adventures in Bridge

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## *This Week in Bridge*

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Seat Opening Bids**

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#### **Tactical Options**

When we open the bidding with the goal of creating a difficult bidding problem for our LHO (or our opponents in general) then we want to eat up as much bidding space from our opponents as possible.

#### **Strength (Opening Light)**

One of the things we can do in the 3<sup>rd</sup> seat is open the bidding light (with as little as 8+ HCP if we have the right type of hand.) If we choose to open light, we need to balance (consider) three parts of the auction:

- Lead directing,
- Eating up bidding space from the opponents,
- Surviving the rest of the auction (what to bid next)

When choosing to open light we will frequently have to balance between opening our “best suit” vs. “most destructive suit”. In 3<sup>rd</sup> seat we have more control (options) for what we might open – in 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> seat the bidding rules generally dictate what suit we open (fewer options.)

*Example*

♠ KQT73

♥ A7

♦ 742

♣ 765

With this hand we can open 1♠ light to help partner get off to the right lead and make the opponents start their auction at the 2-level.

#### **1-level vs. 2-level (Level of Opening)**

When we are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> seat our range for a 2-level opening expands from the traditional 5-10 HCP to 3-12 HCP. This could be a bit weaker or could be a bit stronger - it's any hand that is not interested in game opposite a passed partner. So if we have a 6c♠ suit and 11 HCP we may choose to open 2♠ instead of 1♠. This makes the opponents start their auction at the 3-level!

Additionally, we may choose to preempt 2♠ in the 3<sup>rd</sup> seat on a hand with a good 5-card suit.

♠ KQT93

♥ 3

♦ AT86

♣ 765



Be careful preempting with a 5-card suit and 5332 distribution (balanced hand.) These hands rarely play well, even when they have a fabulous suit.

#### 4-card Suits

We may also choose to open a 4-card Major in the third seat. This can be a little tricky, but if we have a hand like:

- ♠ KQJ6
- ♥ A6
- ♦ Q65
- ♣ 6543

We would clearly prefer to open 1♠ than to open 1♣ -- to get a ♠ lead and preempt the bidding for LHO.

When opening light we also may prefer to open a 4-card Major in an effort to make the opponents find their likely fit a level higher than they would if we open 1-minor. Compare 1♣ vs. 1♥ opening bids in this example:

- ♠ 987
- ♥ KQT6
- ♦ 54
- ♣ KQT3

#### Aggression

Opening 1♠ is more preemptive than opening 1♥. Opening 1♥ is more preemptive than opening 1♦. Opening 1♦ is more preemptive than opening 1♣. So we will stretch more to open 1♠, less for 1♥, less for 1♦, and even less for opening 1♣ (which we generally open to be constructive.) There is also the option of opening at the 1-level vs. 2-level with ♠, ♥, ♦. With ♣ we do not have the option of opening at the 2-level. Considering these things, then when partner opens the bidding in the 3<sup>rd</sup> seat we should understand which bids partner will be most aggressive with:

- 1♠ Most Aggressive,
- 1♥ Less Aggressive,
- 1♣ Less Sound - ♣ more aggressive than ♦ because of the lack of a 2♣ preempt option.
- 1♦ Most Sound

Attack your opponents from the 3<sup>rd</sup> seat, and try opening:

- With fewer HCP,
- With a 4-card Major,
- At the 2-level with a 5-card suit,
- At the 2-level outside your traditional range,
- At the 3-level or higher with fewer cards than you would normally have.

Or try to attack them in any other creative way you can think to!