

Newer Players

Reasoning with Robert

More on competing over preempts



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People love to preempt the bidding. The more they do so, the more tools you need for dealing with it. I recommend these competitive bidding agreements after your RHO makes a preemptive opening bid at the two level.

Double and bid – lots of points

After a two-level preempt, a 2NT overcall shows a stopper in the opponent's suit and a balanced hand with about 15–18 HCP. With more points than that, you “double and bid NT” – showing a similar hand, just with too many points to overcall 2NT.

West	You	East	South
2♥	Dbl	Pass	2♠
Pass	2NT		

You show a balanced hand with a heart stopper and about 19–21 HCP.

West	You	East	South
2♥	Dbl	Pass	2NT ⁽¹⁾
Pass	3NT		

(1) Relay to 3♣ (lebensohl)

This 3NT bid shows a balanced hand with a heart stopper and about 19–21 HCP. You hope partner has about 4–5 HCP, so you have a chance of making the contract (their 2NT bid usually shows zero to a bad 8 HCP).

Jump overcall of 3NT

A jump overcall of 3NT is a practical bridge bid. When you jump to 3NT, you do not have a lot of high-card points – if you did, you would have doubled and rebid notrump. Instead, a jump to 3NT shows a stopper in the opponent's suit and a long, strong minor suit.

♠A 5 ♥K 7 ♦10 8 ♣A K Q 10 6 4 3

West	You	East	South
2♥	3NT		

After a 2♥ opening bid, simply jump to 3NT, hoping to make. Partner should know that you have a distributional hand with a heart stopper, not a strong balanced hand. Jumps to 3NT are “trick-oriented hands,” not high-card point-oriented hands.

Western Cuebids

When you have a strong, trick-oriented hand but do not have a stopper in the opponent's suit, then you need a way to ask partner if they have a stopper – aiming to play 3NT. You can do this by making an immediate cuebid of the opponent's suit, sometimes called a western cuebid.

♠9 ♥A 8 ♦A K Q 9 7 5 3 ♣J 7 3

West	You	East	South
2♠	3♠		

Your 3♠ bid shows a source of tricks and asks partner if they have a stopper in the opponent's suit. If they do, they bid 3NT – and you have a good chance of making it. If they do not, then they bid 4♣ (or 5♣ if they have a great hand with no spade stopper), and you pass if you have clubs and correct to diamonds if you have a hand like the one above.

“Crazy bids” – not natural

When you have a strong hand with a long minor suit, you try to get to 3NT. You can overcall, double and bid your suit, use a western cuebid, or even just bid 3NT. All these options keep the bidding below or at 3NT. When you have a long, strong minor, this is extremely important. Because of this, it makes no sense for a jump

overcall of 4♣ or 4♦ to be a natural bid. So, I recommend using a jump to 4m (going past 3NT) as showing a two-suiter. Consider this sequence:

West	North	East	South
2♠	4♣		

Because a hand with only a club suit might want to stay below 3NT, this should show a different kind of hand. We use this as a two-suited hand, showing clubs and hearts (the other major), and an excellent hand. This bid is called leaping Michaels and is game forcing. With:

♠6 ♥K Q J 9 8 ♦A 2 ♣A K J 5 3,

jump to 4♣. This bid is game forcing and asks partner to choose between 4♥ and 5♣ (or higher).

Summary**Balanced Hands**

2NT Overcall = 15–18 HCP with a stopper in opponent's suit. Systems on.

Double and bid notrump = 19+ HCP with a stopper in opponent's suit.

Double and cuebid = Strong, balanced hand with no stopper in opponent's suit.

One-suited hands

Simple overcall = 12–17 HCP. Suit quality is important when stretching to bid.

Jump overcall = Either a strong hand with six-card or longer suit (don't preempt a preempt!) or a two-suiter if leaping Michaels.

Double and bid suit = A strong hand with a five-card or longer suit.

Jump to 3NT = A solid minor and stopper in opponent's suit.

Western cuebid = A solid minor and no stopper in opponent's suit. ▶▶