



Bidding Basics

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A tour of the bidding box for newer players

Opening bids of 3♣, 3♦, 3♥ or 3♠ show a weak hand (less than opening-bid strength), typically with a seven-card suit.

Because there is no weak two-bid in clubs available, the 3♣ opening could occasionally be made with only a six-card (decent) suit. Because there are weak two-bids available in diamonds, hearts and spades for six-card suits, a three-level preempt in those suits should indicate a seven-card suit.

Hands that roughly satisfy the Rule of 20 (high-card points plus length of two longest suits) should be opened on the one level. For example, open at the one level with each of these hands:

♠A 2 ♥7 6 3 ♦K Q J 10 9 6 3 ♣2
 ♠2 ♥A K 10 8 7 6 2 ♦K J 2 ♣5 4
 ♠Q J 10 9 8 5 4 ♥A K 3 2 ♦3 ♣2

If the hand is weaker, you should proudly open on the three level to preempt your opponents. With each hand below, open on the three level in your seven-card suit:

♠8 2 ♥7 6 3 ♦K Q J 10 9 6 3 ♣2
 ♠2 ♥A K 10 8 7 6 2 ♦9 8 2 ♣5 4
 ♠Q J 10 9 8 5 4 ♥8 7 3 2 ♦3 ♣2

High-card points

There is no exact high-card-point requirement other than “less than an opening one-bid.” The final example above has only 3 HCP, but is certainly acceptable if not vulnerable. Don’t preempt with 12 or more HCP.

Suit quality?

Try to have a “decent” suit – not something like J-8-7-6-5-4-2. “Two of the top three honors” is not a requirement. Be more inclined to preempt when most of your high-card values are in the seven-card suit. For example, don’t open 3♠ with:

♠10 8 7 6 5 3 2 ♥K Q ♦K J 2 ♣3.

Vulnerability

This is a big factor. If your hand is borderline, let it guide you. When vulnerable, be sounder. A hand such as:

♠K J 9 8 5 4 2 ♥— ♦7 6 5 ♣4 3 2

would be an acceptable 3♠ preempt if not vulnerable. If vulnerable, I’d

pass (or maybe chicken out with a 2♠ opening). When not vulnerable, be aggressive. Make yourself a difficult opponent!

Position

Just as with weak two-bids (see the June issue), position matters. Be aggressive as the dealer and super-aggressive in third seat. In second seat, be sound. In fourth seat, pass the hand out if you are on the low end. You can “preempt” in fourth seat even with marginal opening-bid values. After three passes, a 3♥ opening would be fine with:

♠K 3 2 ♥A Q J 10 8 7 3 ♦5 4 ♣2.

On the side

A side ace (or other high card) is OK for a preempt, as is a side void (as long as it doesn’t make the hand worth an opening one-bid). A side four-card suit is OK (but unlikely when you already have a seven-card suit). Any of these hands would be an acceptable three-level preempt:

♠A 2 ♥Q J 10 9 8 7 6 ♦4 3 2 ♣2
 ♠K J 10 9 8 7 3 ♥— ♦10 9 8 7 ♣3 2
 ♠8 7 6 5 ♥7 6 ♦A Q J 10 9 7 6 ♣—

BIDDING BASICS QUIZ

You deal with nobody vulnerable.
What is your action with:

1. ♠7 ♥765 ♦863 ♣KQJ1087
2. ♠J765432 ♥AKQ10 ♦32 ♣—
3. ♠54 ♥KQ10876 ♦543 ♣K2
4. ♠5432 ♥32 ♦— ♣KJ109872

You are in second seat, vulnerable
against not. What is your action with:

5. ♠76 ♥K987652 ♦Q2 ♣Q3
6. ♠KQJ10876 ♥3 ♦2 ♣J765
7. ♠A65 ♥54 ♦32 ♣KJ8652
8. ♠3 ♥3 ♦AQJ10876 ♣10965

Answers

1. 3♣. A good six-card suit is acceptable for a club preempt.
2. 1♠. The suit is too weak for a preempt, the side strength is too much, and the overall hand strength is too great.
3. 2♥. Open with a two-level preempt with only six cards (unless clubs).
4. 3♣. Light on high cards, but everything else makes this a desirable hand for preemption (especially not vulnerable).
5. Pass. Lousy suit, lousy hand and the worst time to preempt (second seat at unfavorable vulnerability).
6. 3♠. Proudly.
7. Pass. Just because you *can* open 3♣ with six cards doesn't mean you *should*.
8. 3♦. Happily. ■

Virgil V. Anderson Jr. 1924–2017

Former ACBL President Virgil Anderson died June 19 at the age of 92. Anderson, who represented District 15 on the ACBL Board of Directors for many years, was ACBL president in 1994. The same year, Anderson won his sole NABC title, the Leventritt Silver Ribbon Pairs, playing with (then) fellow Board member Jayne Thomas of Florida. Anderson, of Springfield MO, was an Emerald Life Master.



Current District 15 Director Phyllis Harlan says, "The bridge world has lost a truly dedicated, outstanding leader with the passing of Virgil Anderson. His contributions to bridge included his service as League president, District 15 president, a member of the World Bridge Federation Executive Committee and chair of numerous tournaments.

"He loved to laugh and to make others laugh with his wry sense of humor and quick wit. His unique Christmas cards were eagerly awaited each year by the recipients to see what he had devised for that year's greeting.

"In addition to his bridge ability, he was an extremely talented amateur actor and appeared in starring roles in numerous Springfield local productions.

"Virgil loved bridge and was especially interested in getting young people to play the game. He treasured the many, many friends he made throughout the bridge world. We all loved and respected this exceptional gentleman and will miss him very, very much."

Anderson was taught bridge by his parents at age 8, but only became addicted to the game after he played his first duplicate game in 1955. He received a degree in economics from Drury College. After a few years of teaching speech and theater, Anderson attended Missouri University Law School. A few months later he was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives, where he served one term before joining the legal department of State Farm Insurance. In 1953, Virgil and his father organized Anderson and Son, a manufacturer and distributor of truck equipment. Anderson retired from the business in 1994.

Anderson is survived by his partner, Leslie Gritzmaker.

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A bundle of masterpoints available in a match? "I hardly think that's of any relevance, not for a Bermuda Bowl man," he retorts. The Abbot is, in a word, insufferable.

Though he commands the monastery duplicate games most of the time, the Abbot finds stiffer competition on the road – players he greatly underestimates, such as elderly married couples and opponents who have read bridge books, making Bermuda Bowl-caliber plays.

Then there's the superbly acerbic Mother of Discipline at St. Hilda's convent, who is the Abbot's ideal foil, even when they're playing as partners. ("Her black punishment book was clearly visible under her scorecard. Unusually, during the present

session, she had not yet found any cause to use it.")

As a finale, the Abbot welcomes a special visitor to St. Titus: his Bermuda Bowl partner, the Parrot.

As always, Bird's characters are fully fleshed (or feathered); there's learning to be had from the deals, which are intriguing, and the humor is impeccable.

While several of these pieces have appeared in the Bridge Bulletin, most have not. If you're an Abbot fan, you've likely already devoured this book; if you haven't yet met the Abbot and his cohorts, what are you waiting for?

Available at bridge supply houses.